


LIGHTS ALONG
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LIGHTS ALONG THE LEDGES

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All the Way by Water and Fathoms Deep



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Lights Along the Ledges

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To
MY SON

Out in the dark that bound me,
Shipwrecked, and lost at night—
Over wide seas I found thee,
Light!

Lights Along the Ledges

CHAPTER I

THE tenth story office windows of Avery, Ames and Avery looked out on the harbor and river and across to the Jersey hills. Young Tom MacLeod, in the window of Mr. Malcolm Avery's room on a June morning, saw the river at its bonniest. Blue water sparkling in the sunshine and crisped with lines of whitecaps by a clean breeze sweeping up across the Bay. Smoke from steamer funnels trailing in pennants of amber and pearl. Gay little waves slapping the fronts of barges, and tugs bouncing along with that suggestion of indefatigable busy-ness whatever their struggle with wind and tide.

Weaving a gallant way through the harbor traffic, past lumbering craft of the ferries, puffing tugs, and majestic liners pushing out to sea, a little white yacht was moving up the river. A toy it seemed from the high window, its bunting

streaming, its brasses agleam in the morning sun. Young Tom MacLeod's eyes followed it until it became a speck trailing a ribbon of snowy wake.

At a desk back in the room old Malcolm Avery, senior partner of Avery, Ames and Avery, and adviser of the MacLeods for a score of years, fidgeted with papers and snapped elastic bands over packages of documents. He could not see the yacht moving up the river but he could see young Tom, and the old lawyer's eyes were full of concern and affection as he waited.

The lad was thinking it over, of course. Getting hold of himself before he said anything. A nasty blow had been dealt him that morning—and not a word out of him. Not a protest of indignation; not a whimper of personal panic. But young Tom had always been like that, the lawyer remembered, from the days he had worn knickers and little belted jackets; a self-contained, silent sort of lad who stood about, hands in pockets, quiet eyes contemplating things—considering, reserving opinions. He stood now in the window, back to the room and to his father's old friend, his long slenderness in loose summer tweeds, slim brown hands behind him holding his malacca stick, quiet gray eyes on the river traffic, mouth

set in such a straight, tight line that the lips were invisible. Cliff MacLeod's boy—to old Malcolm Avery still Cliff's youngster, in spite of young Tom's six and twenty years, and his six feet of stature, and the bronzed face already hardening into settled contours. A young face showing lines cut by unimaginable experiences in France, by three years of engineering work in India, by the shock of recent bereavement and disaster.

“If I could have saved anything, Tom ——” Old Malcolm Avery broke the long silence. “You know how this makes me ——”

Young Tom MacLeod swung around in the window.

“It's the boat, Mr. Avery. That makes me feel worst of all. How my father could have brought himself to part with the *Vagabond* I can't see. I'd gladly spare that couple of thousand you seem to have corralled out of the smash if you could have kept the *Vagabond* for me ——”

“Tom, we couldn't touch those bonds. Your father couldn't touch 'em. They were registered in your name by your mother. She bought one on each of the birthdays you were away and tucked the bonds in her safe-deposit box along with that letter I've just given you.

“The yacht,” pointed out the lawyer, “had to go—on that note your father gave ——”

“But I can’t see,” interrupted young MacLeod, “how he ever came to risk the *Vagabond* on any note. It tells me, plainer than any figures you could show, how deep he was in—the poor old Pater—before he brought himself to borrow money on the *Vagabond*. She was my mother’s gift to him.”

“I know, Tom. And I know how she loved that boat—how happy those two were on the yacht. Always like two kids on a holiday. Maybe after your mother went your father didn’t feel the same about the *Vagabond*. Maybe he ——”

The first flash of emotional feeling that had betrayed itself in the young man’s controlled face showed now. “I loved the boat too! And my mother would have wanted me to have it. He must have known that.” It was the only bitter word young MacLeod had uttered and for all his pluck under the knock-down blow he had received that morning something of the weariness and strain of his long journey showed now in his face. He had come straight from the overland train to the lawyer’s office. He had known his home-

coming was to a home no longer in existence; that his father and his mother were gone—Avery, Ames and Avery had cabled that. But only this morning had he learned that gone also was everything else—conditions he had always taken for granted, whose stability it would never have occurred to him to question. The very foundations of his existence seemed to have been swept from beneath his feet.

“The *Vagabond*,” young Tom MacLeod lifted a paper-cutter from the glass top of the desk and set it down carefully two inches from its first position, the controlled action that had to be action of some sort, however carefully controlled, revealing as no outburst of speech could the strain he was under, “the *Vagabond* seemed a part of *them* that I could still have. Something that was home. All the way back from India, Mr. Avery, I have been planning to go right aboard the yacht. I—I meant to sleep aboard to-night.”

He picked up his hat.

“Stay and have lunch with me, Tom. I’d like to talk further with you.” The lawyer tried to keep the concern out of his voice and his eyes. “I want to hear about your immediate plans. Of course you know”—he put a hand on young

Tom's shoulder—"Tillie and I would be pleased to pieces if you'd spend a bit of time with us. Why not bring your luggage up to the house and make it your headquarters? Tillie and the girls are going down to Long Island next week. You could run down there with them and put in July at Woodways. The girls would be tickled to death ——"

But young MacLeod firmly though courteously vetoed this kindly proposal. What he wanted, evidently, was to get away. That he had some definite plan in mind, and an immediate plan, his father's old friend was sure. Young Tom did not look merely sad and disconcerted; there was determination in his gray eyes and in the set of his mouth, and in the straight way he carried his shoulders as he shook hands and went out that argued decisive action of some sort.

"Ah well, I shall hear from him," reflected old Malcolm Avery, touching the buzzer for his stenographer. It was a busy morning and he had given most of it to the son of his client and friend. "The lad's sore now, and hurt to the quick. He wants to get by himself and think things out. Poor lad—a lonely home-coming for him. And a lonely sort of boy always I imagine.

Those two were wrapped up in each other—amazing their devotion. But I wonder if the boy didn't miss something that might have helped him now. . . . Wish I could have saved him that boat!"

CHAPTER II

YOUNG Tom MacLeod had a very definite and immediate plan. It concerned an enterprise, however, of far too sentimental—not to say surreptitious—a nature to render advisable its discussion with any lawyer.

The “Owl” train for Boston was running past Bridgeport. It wouldn’t stop until it pulled into Back Bay station at breakfast time, and all up and down the long succession of Pullmans people lay asleep. Only a porter here and there, sliding on noiseless boot-soles down a dim passageway between straight falling curtains, seemed to be awake . . . and in lower 14, car 1131, young Tom MacLeod.

Sitting up in his Pullman berth Tom was making a list of his assets.

A magazine was propped on his knee and on the magazine was a scrap of old envelope upon which with his fountain pen he jotted down certain items in neat, small letters and figures clear as printing; the figures and handwriting of the technically trained engineer.

What he had jotted down amounted to this:

Item 2 Thousand-dollar railroad bonds worth at the moment, probably around eight-fifty.

Item \$368.49 cash, representing remainder of saved up pay.

Item Plentiful and fairly presentable hot weather wardrobe including one pith helmet.

Item Good supply of Class A health (now the after-effects of that infernal rheumatic fever were nearly over).

Item A job waiting in September.

Young Mr. MacLeod searched in the deeps of a waistcoat pocket and possessed himself of a stubby red pencil with which he drew a roseate line under the last item. After all, it was the asset most immediately valuable and heart-warming.

The electric light over Tom's bent head glimmered on his slickly brushed fair hair, untousled yet by his pillow, and on the clean line of his jaw where it turned under to meet his slim uncollared throat. That good jaw and his long, well-knit frame he got from his mother's side—New England folk from early settlement days. And also from them his steady gray eyes that looked straight at you, his head turning with them. No

oblique glances from young MacLeod's eyes. Frank eyes, with New England shrewdness and humor back of the frankness.

The unconquerable wave in his sternly groomed hair and his sensitive, thin-lipped mouth were heritage of his artist father. Sensitive lips Tom had learned to control—in France, back of that in college years, and away back of that in lonely boy years that had taught him self-repression. But the gray eyes were still young enough to betray him. In them sometimes was a wistfulness. Not everybody saw it for young Tom MacLeod was a pleasant chap to pal with: a good scout his men acquaintances averred, a good deal of a dear allowed the more exacting sex.

“You take a good loaf this summer, MacLeod,” his chief had advised when Tom reported at his New York office. “You’ve done good work and now that you are back home you’ll be wanting to breeze round a bit and see the folks; and get into tip-top condition — that was a nasty touch of fever you had in India. You come here September fifteenth and I’ll have a bridge building job for you out in Wyoming. Won’t need you before then. In fact don’t want you round. You clear out and play a while.”

The chief had seen that something back of the steadiness in young MacLeod's eyes. Tough, that both of the lad's parents should have gone like that while he was in India! But of course the boy had other relatives and hosts of friends. And half a dozen girls, probably, eager to welcome him home after a three-year absence. He wasn't in shape for hard work. No use tying him to an estimating desk in New York through the hot weather. He'd be a lot better outdoors, playing round and forgetting his troubles.

"Play a while," Mr. MacLeod was reflecting as the train slipped through New Haven and into the open sea-indented country beyond. Where the dickens was he to play? And with whom? Four years of prep school and two years of Tech; and then a year in training camp and at the front; and then another year of intensified work at Tech; and then three years in India . . . not much chance to collect play-inclined contemporaries in any one place. And Cliff and Celia—thus had his parents preferred to be addressed by the big lad who made them feel increasingly older—Cliff and Celia had established no home in any community where a boy could gather playmates. All summer aboard their *Vagabond*; and in winter at Cliff's

studio apartment in town. There had always been a shake-down for Tom at the apartment—and of course a rousing welcome—when he came to them for brief vacations. But not much chance in that for the acquiring of youthful playmates.

He had grieved for Cliff and Celia terribly—when the news reached him in India. He had loved them so much and craved so what they could spare to him out of their happiness. The one ray of comfort, these lonely months, had been the remembrance that the *Vagabond* still remained to him. It would be sort of a home in which those two would always seem near him. . . .

And now even the *Vagabond* was gone.

Somebody's traveling clock in the depths of a suitcase sounded three muffled strokes. In a few hours he would be in Boston. Well, he knew what he was going to do in Boston.

He had made up his mind before leaving Mr. Avery's office. The yacht was still at South Boston where Cliff and Celia had left her at the end of a cruise and had been put in the water, Mr. Avery had ascertained, ready for the coming of her new owner who was at present in Europe on business.

If Tom MacLeod spent one more night on the old boat—the night on board that he had been planning for and looking forward to and that was so specially hard to give up—the new owner of the *Vagabond* need never know about it. And very likely wouldn't have any extreme objection if he did. He'd understand, that chap, if he loved boats himself.

And now Celia's letter, handed to Tom by Mr. Avery, made a visit to the yacht imperative.

Tom spread out the letter on his knee and read it again. Then he folded it and put it, with the list of his assets, in his pocketbook, switched off the electric light, took a look at the landscape flitting by and stretched himself out for slumber.

The heavy, smooth rumble of the train over the rails was soothing Tom into drowsiness when something startled him wide awake again. A small, agile body landed squarely on his face. Sharp-nailed little paws dug into his neck. And then something small and warm and furry burrowed down under the sheet, squirming against Tom's leg.

"What the deuce?" ejaculated young Mr. MacLeod, springing up in some natural consterna-

tion and groping for the switch of the electric bulb.

A series of terrible though smallish growls proceeded from the burrowing furry thing down by his bare toes. It seemed to be turning round and round in a sort of incomprehensible frenzy but as yet had not offered to bite him. By the time he got the light on and the coverlets down the commotion had subsided. The turned back sheet revealed a pair of bright eyes peeking out saucily at Tom MacLeod. In the nice warm place where Tom's hastily withdrawn feet had been was cuddled a small Pekingese dog evidently disposed now for a lengthy snooze.

As Tom and the Peke looked each other in the eye a tiny mouth opened to display an incredibly pink tongue in the contortions of a deep and satisfied yawn. Tom loved dogs, big or little, but when he put out his hand to fondle the mite's head there ensued one of the terrible if tiny growls.

Tom chuckled. "Well, Mr. Sing Low, or Growlo, or whatever your name is, I approve your taste in picking friends but can't say I admire your disposish. Say it with a smile, old man, when you're asking a favor. Now in about two

minutes you and I are going to hear from somebody."

He reached up and turned off the light and then thrusting thumb and forefinger between the berth-curtains, he peered through the aperture into the darkened aisle.

No porter, he surmised, would be pressed into service to discover an animal smuggled into a Pullman. Some distracted and disheveled female would presently materialize and young Mr. MacLeod was anticipatively joyous over her undoubted state of mind. She wouldn't dare call aloud to her pet in a car full of sleeping passengers. And as to which of the quiet berth-curtains he lurked behind the poor soul would have no notion whatever.

Right-o, there she was, coming down the aisle from the forward end.

And she was the very prettiest thing young Tom MacLeod had ever seen in his life. She had on a gorgeous mandarin jacket, coral hued and with indigo and gold embroideries. Down the front of it two ropes of red-brown hair fell to her waist. Below a lacy petticoat or something her little bare feet, hastily thrust into high-heeled pumps, crept along the aisle. Her small hands were

clutched at her breast and her eyes darted this way and that, seeking a betraying movement in some berth-curtain. Very softly and agitatedly she was making, as she approached Tom's peep-hole, little murmurous whistling sounds.

To cut the torture short Mr. MacLeod thrust forth a hand with a beckoning finger. She stopped short when she glimpsed the hand. (It must have looked ghostly enough protruding through the curtains with its moving forefinger.) Then she advanced and stood just outside the drapery.

Tom did not dare impose his resonant barytone upon the sleeping stillness of the Pullman. He grasped the Peke firmly by its middle and despite its horrific growls shoved it through the curtains and deposited it in the arms of its mistress.

She caught the little dog to the coral and gold embroideries on her breast and stifled its growls by the simple expedient of winding one of her long braids round and round its head.

"Oh, *thank* you," came her grateful whisper. And she tiptoed hastily back to her end of the Pullman.

CHAPTER III

Now Mr. MacLeod, being six-and-twenty, could scarce be expected to accept as completely satisfying that warming consciousness of a kind deed performed—and to let it go at that. He had to see what beauty-by-day was like.

Maybe, after all, she was thirty-five or forty. The light is dim in Pullmans at night and women's looks are so deceptive anyhow.

He was out of his berth long before any passenger at the forward end of the car was astir. When he returned from the dressing-room, tweeds meticulously brushed, tie perfectly adjusted (he had even managed to shave) the porter was fussing over unmade berths at the center of the car and the front end was quite shut off from Tom's view. They were drawing into South Station now and Mr. MacLeod, deciding that the front end was the end of ends to alight from, strolled with his grip up that way.

Yes, she was there, making ready herself to leave the train. And she was even prettier by day in a demure little hat and tailored frock than she had been in the coral and gold mandarin

jacket. Her profile against the window: small head heavily crowned with chestnut hair, straight little back and pretty shoulders from which a traveling wrap was slipping, made Tom think of a charming French print that had hung in his mother's bedroom,—a girl-picture called "Puzzled" by an artist named Nicolet. There was something in the serious face with slightly lifted, questioning gaze and in the expression of the brown eyes that was very like "Puzzled" who had always charmed his young imagination.

This girl did not look so much puzzled, however, as anxious. She pretended to be very busy adjusting her bags and her gloves but she kept sending furtive glances through the window at the platform outside, as though she dreaded rather than hoped to see somebody, come to meet her train.

Sing Low, or Growlo, was not in evidence though a doggish looking basket of leather-trimmed wicker seemed to hint at his nearness. There was another bag, a big black leather suitcase, and on a leather-framed tag attached to its handle Mr. MacLeod, by stooping nonchalantly to flick a speck of dust from his trouser-leg, read the name Hageboom.

Not much of a name for so lovely a being—but of course feminine names can be changed. . . .

Tom was standing at the end of a line of people waiting to leave the car and his position was, through strategic manœuvring, beside the young lady's section. He wondered if it would do to make concerned inquiry about last night's runaway but decided against the impulse. There was something of reserve about Growlo's young mistress that rendered too dangerous any informal pleasantries of that sort. After all, she hadn't had a glimpse of him, Tom remembered. Except for a pajama-cuffed hand emerging from a curtain. And she didn't seem to have the least curiosity about him, or his hand, or about any possible masculine befriender of Growlo among the several gentlemen waiting in the line. She was far too busy scanning faces on the platform outside.

The porter came and got her suitcase (the doggish basket she carefully retained in her own possession); and Tom, just ahead of her as she stepped out of the car, heard her low-spoken direction to a red-cap.

"Please put me in a taxi that will take me to the Touraine Hotel."

Tom had cherished an idea of stopping at the

Copley Plaza but after all, he decided, the Touraine was a good place; he had always liked the grill there and that homelike lounge with the big fireplace. So he left the subway at Boylston Street station and stepped across to the Touraine.

But though he lingered in the homelike lounge for an hour neither Growlo nor Miss Puzzled put in an appearance. Tom was sure they could not have arrived ahead of him for no Hageboom had registered at the desk. Just above his own name was scrawled *E. B. Jameson, Coxsackie, N. Y.*—the first arrival of the morning and presumably a traveling salesman.

However, Tom took a chance. He drew the room clerk's attention to the name.

"Tall, red-headed chap?" asked Mr. MacLeod genially. "I knew an Ed Jameson from Coxsackie—went to prep school with him."

The clerk favored Tom with a stony stare. "Not the type at all. Guess it isn't your friend."

All that day the room clerk watched Tom rather sharply as he went in and out, but the dainty Miss Hageboom never appeared.

Tom's special business in Boston could not be transacted until evening and time hung a bit

heavy on his hands. He read the papers in the lounge all morning—keeping one eye on the elevator doors, and lunched twice, in the main restaurant and also down in the grill. Tom MacLeod, you understand, was not the type of young man who hangs about hotel lobbies seeking flirtatious adventure, but he was a young fellow at a loose end and desperately lonely. His encounter with the brown-eyed owner of Growlo was the pleasantest thing that had happened to him since his return to American shores. He thought he should like little Miss Puzzled if he knew her, and though he hadn't much hope of knowing her there would be certain comfort to his loneliness in seeing her again.

But after lunch he gave it up and went to his room to look over his mother's letter. He had read it several times since leaving Mr. Avery's office. Now he got it out again and was able to go through it without that choking tightness in his throat and blur of tears before his eyes.

It had been written almost two years ago and it was the kind of letter a mother would write, knowing that she would never see her boy again and wanting to give him something to carry on with through the years. She ought to have been more

to him, she said. She and Cliff had been too absorbed in each other. They had never meant to let Tom feel neglected, but now she was afraid, perhaps, sometimes he had. She had realized, those months while he was in France, how much more she and Cliff might have been to him. And now he was in India and she was going to leave Cliff and him—and she saw too late how close the three of them ought to have been.

She asked Tom to forgive her—he, her boy who was so close to her heart in these last days. She wanted him to know how she loved him. And how she believed in him—how safe she felt about his future.

And then it was Cliff she spoke of. Cliff committed to the son's most tender care. Tom must try to be to Cliff what she could not be any more: a strength and companion and playmate. Cliff must not be allowed to go under. . . .

Tom MacLeod let the sheets fall from his hands. Cliff *had* gone under. Poor Cliff, happy-go-lucky artist, trying to play at big business with the fortune left in his care; seeking distraction from loneliness and making a disastrous muddle of things. Tom could not bring himself to blame Cliff MacLeod too bitterly. The very irresponsi-

bility of that blithe spirit had called and held all the rich tenderness of Celia's love.

At the end of her letter to Tom this postscript:

I leave a message for you on the *Vagabond*. Look for it the moment you return home. I cannot leave papers concerning this matter in my safe-deposit box, for it would hurt Cliff too much to think I had business, or any part of my life, not shared with him.

You will find the message behind a panel on the port side of the aft cabin. Cliff hated my cutting a swastika in that panel, but I did it to show you the place.

I cannot imagine either you or Cliff selling the *Vagabond*. But if such a thing should happen, do not let the yacht go, Tom, until you have secured what I have put behind that panel. This is vitally important. Your mother, C. E. MacLeod.

Thus it will be seen what imperative business young Tom MacLeod had in Boston. The *Vagabond* had been sold. Before the new owner took possession Tom must obtain that message of his mother's.

Very probably whoever owned the boat would make no more objection to the search for a mother's message than he would to a sentimental last night on board. But if even Cliff MacLeod could not have knowledge of Celia's secret much less must any stranger be told of it. No, the search must be made without permission of anybody. Tom had his own keys for the cabin doors

and if the yacht was unoccupied he could slip aboard after dark and be off at dawn.

It is not to be denied that this undertaking offered an element of attractive adventure. Tom was only twenty-six and he had dreamed all the way across an ocean and a continent of coming home to the old boat. Quite apart from the matter of Celia's message was an obstinate determination to have one more night aboard. If fate had robbed him of everything else it wasn't going to rob him of that home-coming to the *Vagabond*.

There was not a plank in the *Vagabond's* hull that Tom did not know; nor a nut in her engine. By the time he reached seventeen he had been able to handle the yacht as well as his skipper father. Probably because he spent so many hours with old Saunders. Up forward "talking boat" with old Saunders while those two were together in the cockpit; helping old Saunders clean the engine while the two were adventuring ashore; making toast on the galley stove for old Saunders who let Tom carry breakfast trays to the aft cabin where Cliff and Celia had coffee luxuriously in their bunks. To the lonely boy the *Vagabond* had meant more than Cliff or Celia ever guessed. He had always dreamed that when he grew up and

they could accept him on their own level—when he could understand those whimsical things Cliff said to her with lifted eyebrow, and those gay side-glances of hers which seemed to say so much to Cliff that Tom couldn't comprehend—that he would be one of them, on board, and not a sort of visitor. Now they were gone. Happy together again somewhere, and without him. . . .

But if only Cliff had spared him the *Vagabond!*

At any rate he was going to have his one night aboard and nobody was ever going to know about it.

After an early dinner, armed with an electric torch, a screw-driver and a chisel (in case tools on the yacht should not be available) he took the subway for South Boston.

There were many cruisers and yawls in the basin but this was not a yachting harbor and few of the boats were in commission. Tom's searching eye located the *Vagabond* lying just off the shipyard and for a moment he felt bitter disappointment for he thought the cabin was lighted up. Then he realized it was only a reflection of the setting sun on closed ports. But that effect of lighted windows gave him an eerie sensation of being again a schoolboy, on his way to join Cliff and Celia for

a brief vacation on board the yacht. He would find them lounging in the cockpit, his mother gay and pretty and tanned in her white boat frock and his father in flannels, pipe in mouth and with yachting cap jauntily aslant. So joyous he always found them, so contented to be on the *Vagabond* together, anchoring where they listed—Gypsies reveling in their roaming.

Tom made careful note of the yacht's position in order to find her later without difficulty. It was hard to wait until dark, now that he was here. The wind-tumbled water, the rocking boats, the salty, tarry tang of the air as he stood on the long wharf set something in him astir—the born sea-lover's thrill to the call of wide spaces. Not a whole quarter of the fortune Cliff MacLeod had let slip through his fingers could have tempted young Tom at this minute to abandon his project of rowing out over that water and climbing aboard the yacht.

When darkness came he had to wait a bit longer until a slim moon had slipped down behind the west. Then in his hired dinghy he rowed out across the ink-black harbor. Little waves slapped against the bow and the night wind ruffled his hair. He had stowed his straw hat under a thwart

with some groceries he had picked up ashore: a bottle of milk, a loaf of bread, a slab of paper-wrapped butter and a bag of peaches. He intended to breakfast like a king and without building any betraying fire in the galley stove. He knew there were blankets aboard and he would go to sleep listening to the ripple and swish of water alongside his bunk. And before breakfast he would slip overboard for a swim.

He had to pass many lighted boats from which came sounds of gay voices and the clatter of crockery in galleys and he drew from his pocket a cloth sport-cap and drew its visor down over his eyes. He wasn't going to be recognized as young MacLeod snooping round to gaze at the boat that was no longer his. Maudlin sentiment it would seem to anyone who spotted him. Well, so it was, perhaps—but of course he had a purpose. And a purpose nobody must know about.

The *Vagabond*, when he drew near, had every evidence of being an abandoned boat. No awnings were up. Ports and skylights were closed. An anchor lantern, probably brought out by a caretaker, swung on the signal mast abaft the bridge. The tender in its canvas covering hung at the davits over the deck house.

Then, rowing around under the stern, Tom's dinghy bumped into something.

A rowboat trailing!

This gave the adventurer pause. If nobody was on board why a tender trailing? Not the *Vagabond's* tender, for that hung, canvas-swathed, in the davits. This was a disreputable old flat-bottomed harbor dinghy and a pair of oars lay in it.

Sneak thieves? Or maybe some cheeky fellow camping out luxuriously o' nights on an unoccupied boat. Tom reconnoitred.

He rowed around the yacht several times, his oar blades dipping noiselessly. A long twenty minutes he held his dinghy close under the cabin ports. Not a sound from within the boat. Not a movement. Not a snore!

It wasn't likely that anybody would go to sleep in a small cabin this sultry June night with doors and ports tight shut. And above the crew's cubby forward the skylight was shut. No, there was nobody aboard. Very probably the old rowboat had been trailing astern when the *Vagabond* was hauled out here and then forgotten, or the caretaker might have come out in it and then gone off in somebody's launch.

Tom pulled his dinghy alongside, made it fast and climbed nimbly to the deck. He tiptoed aft, along by the deck house, to the cockpit. There he got out his electric torch, flashed on the light and inserted his key in the lock of the cabin door.

And then he felt the knob turn under his hand! The door was jerked open from within.

“Wh-what do you w-want?” demanded a very young, very wrathful and very scared feminine voice.

Framed in the doorway, in the full glare of Tom's torch stood a girl in a coral and gold mandarin coat.

It was the girl of the Pullman.

CHAPTER IV

TOM, behind the electric torch, was not visible to the girl in the doorway as she was to him, standing in the full stream of light. It glimmered on her hair, falling in two long chestnut braids over her shoulders, and revealed her eyes, deep brown and startled, and her white throat where a little pulse beat, witness to the terrified thumping of her heart.

“Wh-what do you want?” she repeated, and Tom who had taken an involuntary step backward at the opening of the door, saw that in one of her little hands she clutched a revolver.

It was no time for fooling, young Mr. MacLeod realized that. With his electric torch and his cloth cap dragged over his eyes he must be an extremely unprepossessing figure to a youthful female out in the middle of a harbor on a dark night. He lowered the torch, its radius of light playing over the girl's little bare feet on the door-sill, and whipped off his cap. He hastened to explain, not very coherently for he was a good deal upset himself.

“Frightfully sorry. Beg your pardon I'm sure. Please don't be frightened. Just came out to have

a look at the *Vagabond*. Our boat, you know ——”

“I beg *your* pardon,” cut in the young lady sharply. “My boat.”

“Oh,” said Tom MacLeod. “Oh. . . .”

“And I’ll thank you to take yourself off it— whoever you are. Quick now—no nonsense. My —my husband is asleep in here. And—and I’ve a dog.”

Indeed portentous sounds that seemed to come muffled through a bunk blanket threatened the immediate onslaught of Growlo.

Young Tom in dire confusion and embarrassment waited not on the order of his going, he went—around the corner of the deck house and into his dinghy which all but capsized under his flying leap.

She was married.

Tragic enough to lose both one’s parents and all one’s income and to be sickeningly disappointed about returning to the old boat for one last glimpse of home and baffled in one’s intention to search behind the panel . . . but *she* was married. That seemed to put the final climax on calamity.

Of course, traveling to Boston (he had thought

it odd that one so lovely and so young should be taking a night journey alone) she had been coming to join her husband. The new owner of the *Vagabond*, a Buffalo man Mr. Avery had mentioned, must have returned from that business trip to Europe; he had run over to Boston to look at his new boat and then sent for his wife to join him.

Tom blamed himself for not making inquiry at the shipyard before setting out in a hired row-boat with an electric torch and burglarish head-gear. Suppose it had been Husband who had heard him sneaking round—and opened that door! A nice mess things would have been in. Husband was probably a big husky middle-westerner who wouldn't have waited to ask intruders what they wanted but would have pitched them right overboard. And quite properly too—breaking into his yacht that way.

Well, what next? . . . *She* was married. The *Vagabond* was forever denied him—unless he could make enough money, plus the two railroad bonds to buy the yacht back when this Whosis from Buffalo got tired of it. He must wait for that, and meanwhile it wasn't likely that anybody would think of ripping out the panels in the cabin.

Some bally outsider might paint that dusky walnut over with tinted enamel but there wasn't a chance in a million the paneling itself would be tampered with.

Tom rowed sulkily back between lines of anchored boats. Suddenly, close by, he heard a girl laughing. He glanced up at a little power cruiser he was passing. The girl was hanging idly over the cockpit rail, laughing at some remark of an unseen person inside the cabin. A ray of light from the open door happened to touch Tom's uplifted face.

"Why it can't be—it is. It's Tom MacLeod!"

Young Tom felt as joyous about the meeting as she seemed to be. It was good at this lonely moment to see the face of a friend.

"Sue Hamlin," he hailed delightedly, pulling in toward the landing steps of the cruiser. "By all that's beatific, what are you doing here? Where's old Bob?"

In two minutes he was aboard the little cruiser, shaking hands and exchanging greetings. Bob Hamlin had been his pal at prep school and he had known Sue Burroughs when her brother's yacht, the *Sorceress*, had hobnobbed with the *Vagabond* at week-end anchorages.

“And now behold the Hamlin yacht,” Mr. Hamlin proudly showed the guest around (it only took ten minutes). “I can run her too,” informed Mr. Hamlin chestily. “Sue trained me in last summer on a houseboat. She can’t fling ‘lubber’ at me any more. I’ve passed. You ought to hear me reel off nautical terms.”

To these good friends Tom confided his scheme for a sentimental pilgrimage to the old *Vagabond*. The Hamlins had noticed the MacLeod yacht of course and had wondered if Tom was back from India and planning to put the *Vagabond* in commission. There had been no evidence of life aboard, they told him, and if the new owner had arrived he must have come late this afternoon. The Hamlins were stopping here only over night on their way home from Marblehead. They insisted on providing Tom with a shake-down in the engine room and he accepted gladly. Good friends and good company were a felicitous happening to lonely young Tom MacLeod just now. Mrs. Sue cooked a jolly supper of frankfurters and hot coffee and accepted with enthusiasm Mr. MacLeod’s modest contribution toward breakfast.

It was while the two young men were splashing about alongside early next morning that Tom

spied signs of life aboard the *Vagabond*. The Buffalo couple were preparing to go ashore. Submerged to the chin and at considerable distance across the harbor Tom could not see very distinctly, but he made out a slim chap in knickers who brought the old rowboat around to the steps. And then a dainty feminine person in a dark wrap (that was she!) descended to the rowboat and sat in the stern while the slim chap pulled away from the yacht.

Anyhow, Tom reflected as he hauled himself, dripping, up the swimming ladder of the Hamlin boat, not a husky enough fellow to have thrown the MacLeod overboard if it had come to that.

The cordial Hamlins tried to persuade Tom to cruise with them to New York but he felt too restless to settle down aboard the little *Susanna*. He had a notion, he said, about running up to New Hampshire for some golf. He'd rather tramp round where there were mountains, he explained, than look at the sea from any deck but the old *Vagabond's*. They seemed to understand, and after a heartening breakfast under the *Susanna's* awning young Tom took his hired dinghy back to the dock and returned to the hotel for his bag.

He was sitting in the Touraine lounge after

lunch, looking at a Boston paper and marveling as always at the oddly overseasoned appearance of the front page (inconsequential advertisements peppered through the salt of the day's news), when a sound just back of his chair made him jump.

Unmistakably the voice of Growlo.

Tom craned his head around the chair-back and sure enough, there on the floor was the doggish leather-trimmed basket. But no dainty Miss Puzzled hovered in the offing. A stout person of forty or thereabouts approached the basket. A maid or companion Tom thought. She was neatly though not smartly attired and carried her left arm in a sling. Picking up the basket, she favored the young man whose interest was apparent with one of those sheepish grins one dog-lover gives another.

“Some voice—for such a little one,” remarked Mr. MacLeod, answering the dog-lover grin in kind.

The stoutish person laughed outright. No prim Bostonian, she. And not a maid exactly either, in spite of her staid costume. There was an air of pleasant good fellowship about her; not demure response to condescension of her betters. “He’s

a Peke," she informed the interested young man. "His name is Ming, but somebody out home always calls him 'Rush, the Growler.' Wouldn't you think, from his voice, he was a Great Dane?"

She gave Tom another genial smile and departed (Rush, the Growler making guttural sounds in his basket) in the direction of the elevators. The gate had scarcely clanged when Mr. MacLeod was bending over the hotel register.

Hageboom was the name he was searching for but he didn't find it. Half-way down the page, however, was a name that seemed familiar.

Miss P. Jameson, Coxsackie, New York.

Well, what were Jamesons of Coxsackie to Tom MacLeod—or Hagebooms for the matter of that? He wouldn't fool around here any longer. Tomorrow morning early he'd be off for New Hampshire. There wasn't anybody in particular he had to look up—except little Aunt Judith up at Newburgh. Later he must be sure to visit little Aunt Judith. His mother would have wanted him to do that.

Just before he had sailed for India Celia and he had gone up to Newburgh to see Aunt Judith. They had had such a happy day—like a stolen

lark. For some reason—Tom didn't know why, visits to Aunt Judith by Celia and himself had always been surreptitious adventures not referred to when they arrived home. Aunt Judith was little and timid and she had always cried during his mother's visits. She had a tiny house and there were always cookies for nephew Tom in a certain jar he knew how to find in the pantry. Yes, he must certainly go to see Aunt Judith this summer. She was a link with his mother's memory that must be treasured.

But first he would have a couple of weeks of golf in New Hampshire. . . . Swat something good and hard.

CHAPTER V.

ADVERTISEMENTS accomplish various purposes. The one Tom happened upon in next morning's *Herald* changed the destinies of several lives. Or rather, since we must believe that an All-Good controls human destinies, Tom did not happen upon that advertisement; it was, perchance, the special and particular thing he had been guided Bostonward to find.

He was reading the *Herald* over an indifferent breakfast at the North Station before departure of the train for New Hampshire. No Jamesons of Coxsackie, New York, had shown themselves about the Touraine during yesterday afternoon or evening. Whoever they were, they must be having meals served in their rooms. No reason, of course, why Mr. MacLeod should care where a married couple and a stoutish maid, or maiden aunt, enjoyed their meals, or what they did with themselves between meals; and at his solitary dinner Tom had decided to be off early in the morning.

He was a thorough sort of chap, was young

Tom, so even without special interest his eye ran down column after column of the newspaper while he negotiated thinnish coffee, coolish eggs and toughish rolls. Destiny again had put the advertisement at the top of a column or Tom might never have perused it.

WANTED: Handy-man for small yacht. Must have knowledge of engine and general work aboard a cruising boat. Also be able to do simple cooking. Steady, reliable person who can give best references. Apply Jameson, Yacht *Vagabond*, Marblehead Harbor.

Mr. MacLeod read this astonishing item three times. Then he gazed speculatively into space for full three minutes. And then a grin overspread his countenance.

Why not? He had the summer before him. Here was opportunity presented, as it were, on a platter to cruise on the beloved boat, and (with luck) to pursue investigations in the cabin. Of course those folks would go ashore sometimes and leave the handy-man in charge of the yacht.

Togged out in sailorman ducks and on a craft owned by people from Coxsackie, New York—landlubbers undoubtedly and without acquaintances in yachting harbors—it was unlikely he

would be recognized by any of his father's yachting friends.

And it would be pleasant (Tom picked the word "pleasant" from others that occurred to him) to be associated even in humble capacity with lovely Miss Puzzled and Rush, the Growler. Maybe the little dog would get fond of him and cuddle in his bunk again—that would mean a lot to a lonely chap.

There was that requirement about "simple cooking." Bit of a poser, that. Of course a handy-man on a boat was expected to do a turn in the galley. Old Saunders had. But people cruising on yachts took a good many dinners on shore. Tom thought he might risk the galley duties. He had done camp cooking in his time and like a good many of his sex he took pride in his culinary accomplishments. He could broil a beefsteak, blend a rarebit or brown a corned beef hash with anybody. What they really required, probably, was someone to run the engine and handle the boat. Coxsackie, New York, people wouldn't know a thing about yachts but they probably would about cook-stoves. That cheery little stout person would at any rate.

So instead of buying a ticket for the mountain

country of New Hampshire Mr. MacLeod purchased one for Marblehead, Massachusetts. First, however, he did some shopping, and instead of a smartish young fellow in gray tweeds with black-banded straw hat and gray gloves, it was a neat but not otherwise noticeable individual who boarded the Marblehead train at North Station that afternoon. A young fellow in a navy blue ready-made suit and wearing a striped cotton shirt and checked cloth cap. This one carried a shiny five-dollar suitcase, and a likely looking bag plastered with steamer labels was on its way to New York to keep company with trunks in storage.

Tom hadn't much fear of being recognized by Growlo's mistress. In the Pullman she had seen only his hand and had not heard his voice. And during the night encounter on the *Vagabond* he had been behind the glare of the torch. Also, as he remembered, she had done most of the talking.

Concerning the stoutish person who had spoken to him over the dog's basket he would have to be careful, but in the humble handy-man seeking a job she would not be likely to recognize a well dressed gentleman who had briefly addressed her in the Touraine lounge. At least Tom hoped not.

If you know Marblehead harbor on a blue and white day you know the springy lift of spirits young Tom MacLeod experienced, coming out on the ferry dock that June afternoon. The air was like wine. The water twinkled under a westering sun. Gay little sailboats darted about like butterflies among the stately yachts. Tall masts of wonderful racing sloops lifted against the blue sky. Across the harbor flags on the Eastern and Corinthian yacht clubs snapped out crisply in the breeze that blew straight across the Neck from wide reaches of the Atlantic.

After a minute's search Tom's eye located the *Vagabond*. She was anchored far down the harbor near the causeway and she looked much less desolate now with her awning spread from bridge to cockpit and the yacht ensign fluttering astern. A fellow in a flat-bottomed rowboat was applying much needed paint to her sides. Tom regarded him with disfavor. Supposing somebody else had beaten him to it and secured the handy-man job!

Tom procured a dinghy at the dock and stowing his shiny suitcase aboard rowed out to the yacht. The landing steps were down and Tom tied his tender and mounted the steps, suitcase in

hand. He looked as if he had come to stay and he met with no challenge from the painter who regarded him without special interest.

“Emily! Here comes another one.”

The whisper drifted through an open port and two seconds later a feminine voice called to Tom from the cockpit: “Have you come in answer to the advertisement? Please step this way.”

Under the cockpit awning stood a pretty girl in middy blouse and short skirt. A very small, alert girl who might be nineteen—or twenty-five. The middy blouse and hair bobbed in yester-year’s fashion made her look no more than nineteen. The girl had merry hazel eyes and the creamy olive skin that sometimes accompanies golden hair, and her smile as Tom came forward made her little face sunny and winning.

“I do hope,” she began, “you are an American. We’ve had two Swedes and a Jap and a colored man here to-day.”

Tom smiled back at her. “Simon pure American. Born in Boston, U. S. A.”

“You speak like an educated man,” she said quickly.

“Good education, miss. Went clear through high school.”

“What experience have you had on yachts?”

Tom, anxious not to appear too gracefully well-bred, was trying to suggest, by a rather gawky attitude, the honest seaman in search of a good berth. But just then he spied, in the cabin doorway, the stoutish person with her arm in a sling, and almost dropped his shiny suitcase. Very closely she was regarding him and it did seem there was something reminiscent in her eye. But you could follow the mental processes which dismissed as impossible her ridiculous suspicion. This was one of those curious cases of type-resemblance, that was all. Expressions flitted across her open countenance with such perfect clarity that the applicant felt cheered.

“Been cruising on small yachts since I was a kid, miss.” He answered the middy girl who seemed to be the one taking the initiative.

“You could run this boat?”

Tom smiled genially. “Sure of it.”

“Can you cook?” demanded the stoutish lady anxiously.

“Let me do the talking, Cousin Phœbe,” interrupted the girl in the middy. She mentioned the make of the yacht’s engine. “You understand that one?”

"Sure," said Tom reliably. His hands fairly itched to get at that selfsame engine.

"Could you take this boat anywhere we wanted to go? You know this New England coast?"

"Like a book, ma'am. But you have charts aboard I suppose?"

"Charts?" questioned the lady in the doorway.

"He means those rolled-up things, Cousin Phoebe—in the locker on the bridge, you know." To Tom, in an awed tone, "You mean to say you can run a boat by charts?"

"Oh, sure," affirmed Tom capably. He felt he was passing satisfactorily . . . but where was the rest of the party?

"Maybe if I could talk with the gentleman ——" he ventured tentatively.

"What gentleman?" snapped the midddy girl.

"Why—the boss, miss. The owner of the boat. He and I could come to an understanding quicker, maybe ——"

"I'm hiring you," informed the bobbed young person. "There is no gentleman on board ——"

"Hm-hmp-hm," came warningly from within the cabin.

“—except,” promptly continued the girl in the midddy, “my brother. And he is——”

“Ask him for his references, Fran.” From within the cabin again. Tom held his breath:

The voice of Miss Puzzled!

And at that moment a small object from which proceeded fearful growls launched itself past the stout lady's skirts and fell upon the boots of the prospective handy-man. Growlo, however, speedily recognized an acquaintance. He fell back, gazed searchingly at the newcomer's face and then, with tail frenziedly awag, leaped and pawed at Tom's trouser-legs. Fortunately the stout lady had turned her head to speak to the occupant of the cabin.

“Ming rarely makes friends with strangers,” commented the girl in the midddy and favored Tom with her sunny smile again. Tom couldn't resist smiling back. And later he found that nobody could. When Frances smiled that sunny smile of hers people smiled back. She was sunny clear through from her golden mop of hair to the golden heart of her. If Tom hadn't seen Miss Puzzled first . . .

He put down the suitcase, fumbled in the approved honest seaman manner for his credentials,

and producing a folded sheet of paper handed it respectfully to the girl in the middy. What she perused was an attractively worded encomium attesting the general good character and efficiency of one Tom Griggs, an employee for years on the writer's own yacht. And the letter was signed by one T. H. Smith, who wrote a dashing hand on the notepaper of a Long Island Sound yacht club. Luckily Tom had found the sheet of paper tucked away in his writing-case. Earnest endeavor had erased the penciled addresses scrawled upon it—and of course an honest seaman's reference would have a grimy, long-folded look anyhow.

“A very good recommendation.” The young lady looked Tom over from top to toe. What she saw, evidently, was as pleasing to her taste as the excellent credentials. She smiled again. This time Tom refrained from smiling back and managed to look properly anxious and respectful.

“Very well, Griggs—or shall we call you Tom?”

“Tom will do, miss.”

“Tom, then. I am going to engage you. You look an honest fellow and—and strong and dependable. That's what we need: someone strong

and dependable who will—will sort of take care of us. Now about your wages,—what did you get in your last place? ”

Tom registered the proper interest of an honest seaman in this important matter and mentioned the sum he thought old Saunders had been paid. After a moment's hesitation, “ All right,” she said. “ And now you can come inside and be introduced to my brother, Mr. Emerson Jameson. He is a— a convalescent and we are taking this cruise for the benefit of his health.”

So Tom followed obediently down the companion steps into the cabin. The familiar interior of that cabin caught at young Tom's heartstrings. Everything was the same; the dusky walnut paneling, the blue velvet cushions on the transoms and sheer blue silk curtains fluttering at the ports, Cliff's books on a shelf, Cliff's palette with blobs of dried color on a peg beside the ship's clock. Even Celia's snapshot of the *Vagabond* at anchor, framed and hanging between the ports. Tom knew he could, with a magnifying glass, pick out himself sitting cross-legged in his bathing suit on the bow deck.

These inanimate things, however, had but an instant to flash at him their stabbing memories.

There was something else in the cabin that commanded his full attention.

Reclining on one of the transoms was one who appeared to be a delicate youth. A knicker suit of heather mixed worsted hung loosely on his slim frame and (even in that cabin and against those pillows) he was wearing a cloth golf cap, much too large and pulled well down over his ears. He had big brown eyes that regarded the new employee with languid interest.

In convalescent Brother Emerson Mr. MacLeod recognized without a shadow of doubt Miss Puzzled of the Pullman.

CHAPTER VI

IN the crew's cubby up forward the new handy-man sat on his pipe cot and did some profound thinking.

The shiny suitcase gaped open on the floor, its contents awaiting distribution on pegs and in lockers. The handy-man was supposed to be making ready for his duties but deep reflection had interrupted.

“Funny business,” ruminated Mr. MacLeod, puffing cigarette smoke through the open skylight above his head. Three women alone on a yacht and picking a skipper through an ad! That girl posing as “brother” and the stout person posing as “cousin.” No more a relative of those girls, that stout one, than he was, Tom felt positive.

Of course the E. B. Jameson in the hotel register had been the girl he had seen in the Pullman. No wonder that room-clerk had looked queer. Her name was Emily—someone had called her that as he came up the steps. Emily Jameson . . . but why this elaborate disguise as “Brother Emerson”?

What were these three women doing alone on the *Vagabond*? And where were they bound for? Well, wherever it was he would take 'em there. "Someone strong and dependable to take care of us," the middy girl had said to him. Looked as though they needed someone to take care of them! Lucky they had him and not the Swede or Jap or African who had applied before he came ——

Suddenly he sat up straight. Where was her husband? She had distinctly said, "My husband is asleep in here," night before last when she had ordered the intruder off the *Vagabond*. And Tom had certainly seen the couple leaving the yacht next morning.

But stay,—what he had seen was a slim fellow in knickers and a smallish girl in a dark wrap. Why not Brother Emerson—in the very knicker suit to-day envisioned? And of course the maiden in the dark wrap would have been sunny-haired Sister Frances. At this illuminating thought young Tom's spirits went up with such a bound that he sprang to his feet and dropped his cigarette into the gaping suitcase, and was only recalled to recollection of it by a smell of burning wool. He slapped out the sparks in his new handy-man's knitted jumper just in time.

There wasn't any husband. She wasn't married at all. The little rascal had simply invented a husband to intimidate the nocturnal prowler aboard her yacht.

He whistled cheerily—the first time young Tom had whistled in months and months—as he stored away his belongings. Well, wherever they were going; however they had got possession of this yacht, he was going with 'em. They couldn't lose him!

He looked with satisfaction around his quarters for (he hoped) the next two months. It was cozy and tidy up for'ard here, with a big skylight to give air in addition to the ports, and in the lavatory tucked in the bow was a shower, an unwonted luxury in crew's quarters. The bunks were supplied with warm blankets and there was an excellent mirror for shaving. Tom would be very comfortable—and oh, the joy of cruising on the old *Vagabond!* Virtually her skipper too, in full charge of boat and engine.

He looked very trim and jaunty when he came up through the hatch in his white duck breeches and jumper, a little Jackie cap cockily aslant on his head. Nobody was about so after pottering round on the bridge a bit and straddling before

the wheel just to see how it felt to have his grip on it again, he slipped down to have a look at the engine. It had been thoroughly overhauled at the shipyard and everything seemed in tip-top condition. He was poking about with a wrench, lost in blissful examination of the engine's vitals, when he heard the voice of Sister Frances. She was standing at the top of the ladder that led down from the bridge.

Cousin Phœbe, he was informed, had a fancy for veal cutlets for dinner. Everything was in the icebox and they would leave it entirely to him. Hereafter, of course, he would attend to the marketing himself.

Now as anybody versed in the culinary art well knows, nothing—with the exception perhaps of puff pastry—may so easily, to the amateur, spell disaster as veal cutlet. If Cousin Phœbe with malicious intent to test the new hireling had selected that dinner she could not have done better. Tom, however, accepted the cutlet without apprehension. Any person who had mastered Differential Calculus, he presumed, could prepare food by following recipes in a cook-book. And the cook-book he had carefully added to the contents of his new suitcase. He merely inquired what

time dinner was desired and went back to blissful communion with the engine.

Pottering round in the lockers he came across an ancient pipe of Cliff's. He could see Cliff, the pipe in his mouth, tinkering busily and arguing with old Saunders. Very tenderly Tom tucked the pipe in his pocket. None of his employers would be likely to want it so it should be his solace now.

When the ship's clock struck three bells he regretfully tore himself away from the engine, went forward to the crew's cubby for his trusty cook-book and repaired to the galley.

But cook-stoves are tricky things. And so are printed recipes. The section in the cook-book devoted to veal, though it seemed to say a lot about the proper color of veal and its dietetic qualities, gave little information about what to do next. Tom learned, for instance, that veal contains more nitrogen and less gelatine than beef and that it stands lowest among heat-producing foods; but there was plenty of heat in the galley and in the chef's face during its transformation into a proper cutlet. The authority casually suggested crumbs and beaten egg and made obscure mention of "a brown gravy." Anyhow Tom

knew how to boil potatoes and open a can of peas. Doubtless all the peas required was warming up in the tasty sauce that seemed to accompany them.

His culinary shortcomings were more than made up for, however, by his cheerful zeal. He dashed up and down the steps from galley to bridge, dish-towel draped knowingly over one arm, and flushed face albeit anxious, modestly proud withal. And on the bridge deck the table, with white cloth fluttering and silverware marked with the yacht's name nicely arranged, certainly looked very attractive.

There was a peculiar expression on the faces of the diners as they negotiated the strange substance dappled with smears of fried egg and floating in a pallid, floury liquid.

"Maybe the *Jap* could cook," was the cruel observation that dropped from the beautiful lips of Brother Emerson. (Tom heard it with anguish, down in the galley.)

"Sh-ssh," he caught also the cautioning whisper of Sister Frances. "The *Jap* couldn't have run the engine. And that colored man had a mean eye. To-morrow we'll order something from the delicatessen."

There was a splash alongside. Through the galley port Tom glimpsed something sailing downward into the deep—it looked like a chunk of cutlet. Followed two boiled potatoes. When he carried up the iced melon a little later plates scraped clean spoke reassuringly of splendid appetites around the table.

“We ought to have those melon spoons,” remarked Cousin Phœbe.

“You mean the pointed spoons with handles shaped like anchors?” The handy-man, anxious to please, hopped back to his galley. But he could not find the melon spoons. When he returned to the bridge an earnest conversation seemed to be checked abruptly but the ladies accepted the spoons he proffered and finished their melon in silence.

When everything was washed up and shipshape in the galley the handy-man presented himself respectfully in the cockpit. The sunset guns of the yacht clubs on the Neck had just boomed over the water and lights were sparkling out on the anchored boats. Tom took the furled ensign from Sister Frances and inquired if after he had put up the riding lantern he might row ashore and

return his hired dinghy. "I'll take the little dog if you like," he offered.

"Why, that's fine, Tom. Ming does need to stretch his legs on shore. But"—anxiously—"you won't be away from the yacht long, will you?"

"No indeed, miss. Shall I inquire at the post-office?"

Brother Emerson and the ladies looked at each other.

"We are not expecting letters at this port," Frances told him. "No, please don't bother. In fact we prefer not to have our names mentioned ashore at all, Tom ——"

Brother Emerson cut in on this. "Trying to dodge visitors, Tom, just for a bit—until I feel more up to it. We should be obliged if you say nothing to anybody about us. We expect to leave the harbor immediately."

"I see, sir. Very good, sir."

The excellent handy-man, accompanied by Growlo, rowed away from the *Vagabond*. The painter fellow had long since finished his job and departed. Tom glanced approvingly at the swan white coat of the yacht. She was pointing her nose into the ocean breeze, her stern lying toward

the Marblehead shore and as Tom pulled away he saw something that made him suddenly shove oars against the water and hold the tender while he gazed.

Across his *Vagabond's* stern was now printed, in yet undried letters:

GLEAM
Connecticut

CHAPTER VII

TOM and the Peke stretched their legs up the steep hill of Marblehead and along the quaint, winding shore road clear to the ancient fort. Here young MacLeod got out his pipe and sat for some time in profound meditation while Growlo sniffed about in the grass. It was gratefully cool after the day's heat—and the heat of his hectic hour in the galley—and so still that voices on the anchored boats came clearly over the water. The incoming tide splashed against the ledges below. Across the harbor was the low green line of the Neck and on the long dock of the Corinthian Yacht Club a string of white-globed lamps glimmered like pearls against the dark breast of the shore. Out at the harbor entrance the submarine tender was ablaze with jewels of light, its landing steps a fairy pathway down to a fairy golden carpet on the still black water. Sapphire lights crackled on the signal mast and answering sapphires twinkled on the mast of a gunboat further down the harbor.

Cliff and Celia had always loved it so here!

But young Tom to-night was thinking about matters of very present significance.

Why *Gleam*, Connecticut—instead of *Vagabond*, New York?

And why such trepidation at his natural suggestion about asking for mail at the post-office?

Obviously his party was earnestly avoiding recognition. And obviously the girl posing as Brother Emerson was the one most desirous of concealing her identity. He recalled her anxious scanning of faces on the platform at South Station. She was afraid of being followed. But by whom?

He did not believe her name was Jameson. Or that any of them hailed from Coxsackie, New York. If they had gone to so much trouble to alter the identity of the yacht they had never signed their real names in the Touraine register. And they had traveled separately. The girl Emily fleeing first from somebody or something and the others joining her later.

How had these women come into possession of the *Vagabond*? And where were they intending to take the yacht—and Mr. Thomas MacLeod?

Tom was young enough to feel a pleasurable thrill of anticipation in the adventure, whatever

it was, rather than any self-protective qualm of concern. Happen what might he was on the jolly old *Vagabond*. Skipper, no less, despite his lowly rating as handy-man aboard. And in some way not yet disclosed he was taking care of the loveliest girl he had ever set eyes on. Well, he'd take care of her! Whatever she was fleeing from; wherever she might be going, she had somebody now to depend upon beside that pair of women. Tom MacLeod wasn't going to let any harm come to her.

He hoped she wasn't going to wear that boy's outfit and the detestable cap throughout the cruise. He liked her much better as Miss Puzzled in appealing feminine guise. She was not little, this Emily Jameson, though her small head and dainty features gave her the effect of littleness and feminine appeal. She was quite a tall girl—five or six inches over five feet, Tom thought, and slender with the graceful slenderness of small bones beautifully covered. Tom had never been partial to the pocket-Venus type of girl. Tiny women were cunning and appealing at twenty but at forty they were apt to lack presence and dignity. And at forty plumpness added to short stature was abominable. A girl ought to be slim

enough and tall enough to promise grace and charm at forty—like Celia's. A girl whose eyes were near the level of one's own—not peering up at one coquettishly.

This was how Tom put it to himself. What he really meant was that the woman dream to him was a companion and a mate, not a pet or a play-thing: somebody he could talk man-talk to, not baby-talk. You had to jolly those "little girls," they always expected it. Tom had never had much use for them.

Down the shore road of old Marblehead he swung blithely, tired Growlo riding in the crook of his arm. Somehow life seemed much less lonely than it had yesterday, the future much less forlorn in prospect. Tom saw the yacht's lights across the water and whistled softly over his oars, rowing back home.

Brother Emerson this evening also had things to think about. Affairs that demanded profound meditation in solitude. And despite his much advertised delicacy the night air did not seem to bother him for Mr. MacLeod discovered the attractive youth smoking a cigarette up forward, back against the open skylight and knickered legs stretched negligently along the bow deck.

“I wanted a word with you, Tom,” vouchsafed Brother Emerson pleasantly, “away from the womenfolk.”

“Quite so, sir,” acquiesced the handy-man gravely.

“I see you have your pipe, Tom. Go ahead and light up. No objection. I’m a smoker myself.”

“Thank you, sir.” What the handy-man saw was that Brother Emerson was a smoker of very recent persuasion. But lately, it was evident, had he cultivated the manly art and as yet avoided the pernicious though comforting practise of inhaling. Instead, he daintily puffed out whiffs of smoke between determinedly pursed lips.

“Tom, have you been on this boat before?”

Tom jumped—but he had an inspiration. “On the *Gleam*? No, sir.”

“Then how did you know our melon spoons have handles shaped like anchors?”

Before answering this the handy-man had to draw several times on his pipe to get the thing properly started. “Why, sir, melon spoons on yachts usually do have anchor handles, don’t they? And grapefruit spoons and all such fancy silver?”

This was evidently news to the owner of the *Gleam*, but an easy nod dismissed these curious seafaring customs as inconsequential.

“What boat were you on before you came to us?”

Tom gave the name of the good ship that had fetched him across the Pacific Ocean. He was prepared to state also his useful position in the liner's crew but Brother Emerson had his mind on something else.

“Well, Tom, I like you and I believe you are just the man we need, but I have to know a little more about you. Sit down, please.” The half-smoked cigarette was flipped overboard and another one retrieved from the silver case Brother Emerson fished out of a coat pocket. “Of course, I know very well you are no ordinary seaman. You don't talk like it and you don't walk like it—except when you remember. You are—you are just as much a gentleman as I am.”

Luckily the handy-man, respectfully lighting a match for his employer's cigarette, had face bent over his cupped hands. Perfectly grave his visage when he lifted the safely burning match to the cigarette. Brother Emerson choked a trifle over the indrawn smoke, then continued:

“Is Tom Griggs your real name?”

“Part of it.”

“You don’t care to tell me all of it?”

“I’d rather not, sir, if you don’t mind—for the present.”

“How long since you were on that boat you just mentioned?”

“I left her a week ago to-day.”

“What made you apply for work on this particular yacht?”

“I saw your advertisement in the paper.”

“That was the only reason? Nobody”—Brother Emerson turned and shot the question sharply—“Nobody sent you here?”

Tom began to get a glimmer. (So that was what she was worrying about!) “Nobody,” he asserted firmly. “I was out of a job. I was broke. I’ve helped on a yacht before. I saw the advertisement and answered it. I can assure you of that on my honor. About my personal affairs I’d rather not speak, if you don’t mind.”

They looked at each other in the moonlight for the space of twenty seconds, the gray eyes quiet and straightforward, the brown ones searching and a bit pleading. Constant attention was necessary to keep it always in mind that those speaking eyes

of brown were Brother Emerson's eyes and not the lovely girl-eyes of Miss Puzzled. "You can trust me—sir," assured the handy-man with great earnestness. "I'll be glad to help you any way I can."

The young moon rode high now, making a silver path on the black water of the harbor. Over on the submarine tender they were playing Taps. Gray eyes held brown eyes another score of seconds. What gray eyes asserted seemed to carry conviction for brown eyes took on a happier, less harassed expression.

"I guess you've had trouble too," the owner of the *Gleam* whispered. "But I—I don't believe you're running away from it. I don't believe you'd run away from anything. I shan't ask why you are here, Tom, but—I'm glad—you are."

"Thank you," said Tom. And forgot to add the "sir."

Brother Emerson did not seem to notice it. "Now," said he briskly, "what do you know of this coast?"

"Have I cruised along it, you mean?"

"Yes. Do you know all the harbors and the safe channels?"

"Like a book—from Bar Harbor to Minot."

“What’s Minot?”

Tom turned and pointed southward across the causeway that blocked their end of the harbor. Jewel bright against the deep blue sky of night a wonderful flash appeared and disappeared, appeared and disappeared—three times as they gazed.

“Minot Light,” explained Tom. “Watch!”

“One flash. Four flashes. Three flashes,” she counted. “It must mean something.”

Tom’s gaze was on the charming profile and tender line of cheek to throat as the small head twisted over a shoulder.

“Yes,” he mentioned dreamily, “‘I love you.’”

“What’s that?” Brother Emerson swung back to a position squarely facing the handyman.

“They call it that:—the ‘I love you’ light. One flash, four flashes, three flashes, I . . . love . . . you. Writers have made stories about it.”

“Oh, I see.” Brother Emerson shrugged tweed-coated shoulders as though this were girl stuff beneath his masculine interest. “Very pretty. About those harbors now, do you know any that are—well, quiet and isolated? Not a gang of

summer hotel people on shore, you understand; or yachts coming and going ——”

“Not many along this coast—in summer time and where there are waters deep enough for a yacht this size. Or where there are yacht clubs.”

“I don’t care anything about yacht clubs. As you know I am on this boat for quiet, after—after a nervous breakdown from—from overstudy ——” The nerve-broken one produced another cigarette and accepting the handy-man’s proffered match coughed and then puffed perseveringly. “What I—what my sister and cousin want is to avoid people, and excursion boats, and crowds. Could you take us, say, to some island where boats are not likely to come?”

“How about Monhegan?”

“Monhegan—where’s that?”

“An island off the coast of Maine. Thirty-five miles out from Portland.”

“Why you could hardly see the mainland from there, could you?”

“Only on a clear day. Few yachts put in to Monhegan harbor but there’s good anchorage and the big mackerel schooners come and go. Mostly fisher folk live there—and a colony of artists in summer time. No automobiles of course, and I

believe only one horse on the island—to haul trunks up from the dock.”

Brother Emerson’s eyes gleamed. “How long will it take us to get there?”

“Well, it could be done in a day’s cruise, but I’d advise an overnight stop, maybe at Portland or Boothbay. It would be pleasanter. And it’s better to keep fairly close to the coast than to cut right out to sea in a boat as small as this—especially with only one man aboard. I mean”—supplemented Tom hastily, “only one man in the *crew*.”

“Oh, I can help you if necessary,” assured the *Gleam*’s owner, “but we don’t want to take foolish risks, of course.”

The slim, boyish figure stood up and the handyman rose also. “Monhegan it is then,” decided Brother Emerson. “We’ll start in the morning. I’ve stocked up with gas and water but you can go ashore early and buy supplies for the kitchen—galley I mean.”

“Very well, sir.” Tom fell back to the handyman’s respectful mode of address as his young employer’s voice took on crisp tone of command.

“All right . . . and, Tom, you needn’t keep sticking that ‘sir’ at the end of every sentence

when we are talking together by ourselves." Suddenly brown eyes were atwinkle with laughter though Brother Emerson's lips kept their dignified gravity. For the life of him Tom couldn't help an answering twinkle. He bowed with all the grace of the debonair Cliff MacLeod.

"You are most kind," he murmured.

Brother Emerson moved aft toward the bridge, hesitated, and then returned. The face lifted to Tom's in the moonlight was very feminine and distinctly imploring.

"Tom—you won't let anybody—*anybody* come aboard the boat, day or night, will you?"

Tom looked down into the lifted face for another score of seconds.

"I won't," promised the handy-man.

A small hand—surprisingly small and soft for even a delicate youth—reached out and rested for a brief instant in the hand that was surprisingly supple and smooth for the paw of an able seaman. "Thank you," breathed Tom's employer gratefully. "Good-night, Tom."

Mr. MacLeod thus abandoned to solitary contemplation of the harbor and the moonlight, dropped through the hatch into his cozy quarters below. But before switching on the light and

making ready for that much anticipated night of repose on board the *Vagabond* he looked long and earnestly through a port that faced southward.

One-four-three, flashed the distant jewel-bright beam of Minot. One-four-three. *I . . .*
love . . . you. I . . . love . . .
you.

CHAPTER VIII

BREAKFAST passed without mishap. Tom knew all about boiling eggs and browning toast and after his early swim he had slipped ashore for a bottle of cream. His efforts aroused such expressions of pleasure that he hoped the melancholy cutlet had been forgotten. After breakfast, accompanied by Growlo, he made a marketing trip and came back with a good honest beefsteak which would offer no baffling complications.

He brought out fifty pounds of ice, and fruit and vegetables. If they were getting away on a long cruise a proper steward must have his larder stocked. Frances hung over the rail and watched the stores being brought up from the tender. "It really looks as if we were going somewhere," she called genially to the hard-working crew who was staggering up the steps with a box of groceries.

The handy-man smiled back at her as he set down the box and paused to mop his brow. It was a breezeless day. Colors hung limp from the masts of the yacht clubs on the Neck and not a sail was astir in the harbor.

“The heat’s bad enough,” complained Cousin Phœbe who was fanning furiously in a deck chair, “but that noise is worse. It’s been going on steady—since seven o’clock this morning. What on earth is it?”

“The submarine tender,” Tom explained. “Re-charging her batteries. They are likely to go on all day. I’ve known them to go on all night.”

“Then the sooner we leave, the better,” snapped Cousin Phœbe, “before poor Emmie has hysterics. My land, doesn’t anybody here do anything about it? All these rich cottage folks ——”

“Government business,” laughed Tom. “Well, we’ll be out of it in half an hour ——”

“I’d stop it!” Brother Emerson spoke wrathfully from the door of the forward cabin which opened from the bridge. “If I had to stay long in this harbor I’d—I’d write to Washington.”

“Em—*your cap*,” warned Cousin Phœbe hastily and Tom chuckled. Even at breakfast the disfiguring headgear had been in evidence; Brother Emerson made no bones of wearing it at table among his womenfolk. (Mr. Jameson was troubled with neuralgia, Cousin Phœbe had explained carefully to the handy-man.)

“If that isn’t like Em,” Frances commented.

“Em would stop anything that was annoying, no matter who did it.”

“Certainly I would,” retorted the *Gleam’s* owner, reappearing properly covered in the doorway. “Why bear with annoyances? Why bear anything you don’t like if there is a way of stopping it?” There was something very imperious in the lift of the little chin.

Not so sweet tempered after all, was the observant handy-man’s reflection. He caught Cousin Phœbe’s sorrowful glance at the lovely, defiant face in the doorway.

“Sometimes we have to, dearie. Some things we can’t stop—or get away from.”

The brown eyes flashed sparks. “You think so? Well, we differ. And please keep your meek sentiments to yourself.”

But instantly she was across the deck and on her knees beside Cousin Phœbe’s chair. “Oh, I’m so sorry. I’m a beast to speak to you like that. Phœbe, Phœbe, you know ——”

“I know, dearie.” A loving hand patted the quivering shoulder. The brown head with its boy’s cap awry was cuddled against Cousin Phœbe’s breast and the girl’s slim arms were tight around the older woman’s neck.

Young Tom perceived of course that matters of more moment than the chug of the sub-tender's engine were being touched upon. Miss Puzzled wasn't all appealing charm; she had a touchy temper and a will of her own. Perhaps her temper and her imperious will had brought upon her the trouble from which she was fleeing. Tom wondered if she wasn't a little spoiled. Of course if she owned the yacht there was wealth enough back of her to give her about everything she wanted. Well, it would be a long day before Tom MacLeod commanded money enough to look at a girl in that class. . . .

"On board *Gleam!*" came crisply up to them. A launch had drawn in to the steps and a young fellow in blue serge was preparing to step aboard the yacht.

The handy-man, leaping down the steps, stayed off the launch with an out-thrust foot. At that hail alongside Frances had ducked below the canvas-covered rail of the bridge and the other two, stooping almost to all-fours, had scuttled toward the door of the cabin.

"Yes, sir?" inquired the handy-man respectfully of the man in the launch.

"Visitors to Marblehead Harbor?" suggested

the blue-serged gentleman pleasantly. "From Connecticut, I see. What town?"

"Tom!" came an imperative summons from within the cabin.

The handy-man with an apologetic "One moment, sir," flung at the occupant of the launch, dashed to the cabin door.

"Tom, don't give him any information. Be very careful."

"Trust me for that," assured their protector. He dashed back to the deck and down the steps.

"Begging your pardon, sir, we've an invalid on board. My boss has to have perfect quiet. No conversation alongside—that's orders."

"I see. But I suppose you can tell me at least the names of your party and what yacht club they represent. I notice you have no club pennant flying ——"

"I'll tell you nothing," retorted Tom truculently. "I've my orders and if you keep me chinning here you'll lose me my job." He retreated up the steps, and after staring a long moment at Tom and then at the yacht the young man in blue serge gave curt order for the launch to back away.

Three anxious faces awaited Tom in the cabin.

“Do you think,” queried Brother Emerson shakily, “he might be a detective?”

“Why, no,” said Tom, “I don’t. I reckon he’s some newspaper chap getting local items about visiting yachts and names of people on board.”

Frances let go a long breath of relief. “You think that was all, Tom?”

“Why yes, Miss Frances. And if you people will pardon my making a suggestion wouldn’t it be wiser to give the names of your party and some place in Connecticut to a newspaper man—or in fact to anybody making inquiry in a harbor—than to arouse curiosity and—and——” Suspicion, he had been going to add but he substituted “antagonism.”

“No.” Brother Emerson’s lips shut tight on the word. “I won’t have a word of information given to anybody. It’s nobody’s business who we are or where we came from. We have a right to anchor in any harbor, haven’t we, Tom?”

Harbors were free to all, he assured them.

“And nobody could force a way aboard if we forbade it, could he?”

“Not while I’m here.” The handy-man flexed and stretched a strong right arm.

“Well then, don’t let anybody on board. I

depend on you, Tom. And the sooner we get out of here the better I shall be pleased."

In the engine room Tom paused with his oil can tipped just short of the priming cup.

Detectives anticipated!

And his three charges scared into fits at the possibility. Now what, in heaven's name, had those three—or one of 'em—done to warrant detectives being put on the yacht's trail? And how would one Thomas MacLeod, son of her erstwhile owner (here young Tom began to have his first bleak doubts) be complicated in the mess?

That pretty Miss Puzzled was involved in any difficulty of criminal significance he refused to believe. The idea was too preposterous. Neither could he believe it of sunny Frances of the winning smile, nor of stout, kindly Cousin Phœbe. No, whatever these three were running away from it was nothing that put them outside the pale of the law. They were merely running away—or *she* was—from unrelished authority and the fear of detectives was the fear of being traced and overtaken. Tom was going to stick by his three charges. What in time would those helpless dears do without a competent male protector aboard? Mighty lucky for them he had happened on their

advertisement. But for that fortuitous happening the three might be at this moment faring forth with nobody but a stupid Swede or self-centered Jap to look after them.

There wasn't going to be much chance to search for Celia's letter though. Nobody on board seemed to have any intention of venturing ashore. That wild dive below the rail canvas of the bridge at first hint of a hail alongside had been significant. And of course Brother Emerson, posing as an invalid, would never leave the yacht. Tom would have to be sure of a good half hour alone on the boat before attempting to pry loose that panel. The racket would be audible from stem to stern. One can get out of sight of others on a small yacht but scarcely out of sound.

The aft cabin of the *Vagabond* was at the rear of the deck house and three steps led down into it from the cockpit. This had been Cliff's and Celia's room and was now occupied by Frances and Cousin Phoebe. It was the general sitting-room when inclement weather made the open bridge deck uncomfortable. There were cushioned transoms under the ports and a center table over which swung a shaded lamp. Deep wicker chairs, cupboards with leaded glass doors and a little

writing desk tucked in at one side of the companion steps made the place very comfortable as an indoor lounge.

Forward of this large cabin there was a partition amidship. To starboard was the small but luxuriously furnished room now occupied by Brother Emerson, and on the port side of the partition a small bathroom and forward of that the galley. From the forward cabin and the galley shallow circular steps led up to the bridge deck. Thus meals could be served either on the bridge or in the aft cabin, and occupants of the deck house could reach the bridge either by the steps forward, or by way of the cockpit and deck. Directly under the bridge was the engine room and sliding doors between forward cabin and engine room, and also between engine room and crew's quarters in the bow, made it possible to pass from one end of the boat to the other without stepping on deck.

But it will be seen that there was small chance for the handy-man to pursue investigations behind the panel unless he had both cabins and in fact the whole boat to himself. Tom could only hope that when the yacht reached more remote harbors his employers might venture ashore for needed exercise.

And the sooner they started, the better!

The sea was glassy smooth this morning and no wind was stirring so Tom had not much difficulty in hoisting the anchor, starting the engine and jumping to the bridge for control of the wheel. But he foresaw his job of skipper might have complications in rougher weather or in a more crowded harbor where the yacht might drift down on other craft before she acquired headway. And running into harbor before a squall would be worse yet. Since there was no one but himself capable of taking the wheel he ought to ask for a second helper in the crew.

But Tom detested the thought of sharing his cozy cubby forward with some brawny Swede or insufferable Jap (even if the Jap could cook!). No, he'd manage by himself, some way—and perhaps he could teach one of those girls to steer the boat. Maybe Brother Emerson could.

But presently to his glad surprise Brother Emerson demonstrated that he both could—and would.

CHAPTER IX

BROTHER EMERSON indeed could scarce control his ebullition of spirits when the *Gleam* swept past the harbor buoys and out into the open Atlantic on the first leg of her course northward. It might almost be said of Brother Emerson that leaving behind the anxieties of harbor existence had made a new man of him.

He whistled. He laughed—laughed as only one whose youthful gay heartedness has been bottled up by prolonged suspense can laugh when cruel pressure is removed. He forgot completely his invalidism (all but the cap that carefully guarded his neuralgia) and straddled knickered legs and squared jacket-sleeved elbows knowingly at the *Gleam's* wheel.

It appeared that on some lake whose locality was vague Brother Emerson had steered motor-boats. But the lake could not have been an important one, the handy-man thought, for though the doughty helmsman knew how to lay a course and stick to it he knew nothing at all about charted channels and blithely slid to port of a red

buoy as they came out of harbor. He was, however, intensely interested when the handy-man pointed out the arrangement of beacons, bell, spar and can buoys that make safe for mariners this dangerous entrance to one of the best and most beautiful harbors on the New England coast.

“You’ll see as we get toward Maine,” Tom promised, “the marvelous system of lights. No such lights anywhere on the coast as between Minot and Grand Minan. When you consider the miles of coastline, east and west, this country has and the millions it costs the government to make the seaways safe for traffic, wouldn’t it be a picayunish yachtsman who rebelled at paying the tax on his boat?”

“Gracious, is there a tax? Is it much?”

“You didn’t know that—you, the owner of this boat?”

“I haven’t owned it very long. In fact,” airily, “my trustee attends to all that. I don’t bother. Now, let’s see: ‘principal channels have nun-buoys; secondary channels can-buoys; minor channels spar-buoys’—that right?”

“Splendid.” Tom smiled into the brown eyes. They were getting on famously.

“And the funny barber-pole buoys with stripes—what about them?”

“You go round them, either way; they mark obstructions in the channel——”

“What about this yacht coming in?”

“Perfectly all right. Just keep well to starboard. If she signals, answer her.”

The helmsman looked helpless.

“Give her one whistle to show you understand,” said Tom. “Always answer with the same signal.”

“But suppose I don’t choose to pass to starboard?”

“You’d have to show a very good reason.”

The small head in the plaid golf cap was tossed upward. “I always have a good reason and I don’t always want to do things.”

“Did you ever drive a car?” asked Tom.

“Often.”

“Well, when the fellow in front of you puts out his hand, warning you to slow up, you don’t push ahead, do you?”

His companion chuckled. “If I think he’s trying to hold the road, I do. I smashed my fender once that way.”

Served her right, thought Tom. “Well, you are

supposed to handle a boat much as you do a car. Recognize the other fellow's signals and yield him the courtesy of the road. Want me to take the wheel while we pass this chap?"

"No, thank you."

The yacht coming in was speeding toward them, a fast cruiser with brasses twinkling in the sun.

"Why doesn't he whistle?"

"He thinks it unnecessary. There's plenty of room to pass."

"I'm going to make him whistle." Mischief gleamed in the brown eyes. A swift twist of the wheel and the *Gleam* swung to port almost across the channel. With a smothered exclamation Tom lunged forward, grabbed the wheel and gave a sharp blast of the whistle in answer to the oncoming yacht's imperative signal.

As the two cruisers swept past each other Tom saw an irate yachtsman leaning from his bridge with binoculars focussed on the *Gleam*. The MacLeod face was crimson.

"There's no need of looking so furious," murmured Brother Emerson. "I only wanted to make him whistle—and crowd him a little. He had plenty of room to turn out——"

"Plenty of room! With a rock there to star-

board of him and high tide covering all but that top of it that shows. Pretty business if I'd run him on that submerged reef ——”

“If *I* had, you mean.” The slim figure in the boy's suit drew itself up and Tom was favored with a cool glance. “I don't know why you should take any of my responsibility. It's my yacht, isn't it?”

Tom shut his teeth together. To be thus led along with genial pleasantries and then smartly reminded that he was merely the handy-man! Well, he wouldn't be lured off his dignity like that again.

“Isn't it?” repeated a soft voice by his side.

“It is, sir.”

From beneath long lashes brown eyes peeped at him. “You're easily teased, aren't you, Tom?” whispered a laughing voice.

And neither one of them was thinking at the moment how extraordinarily unmasculine were Brother Emerson's tactics.

Presently, while the handy-man stood at the *Gleam's* wheel, eyes frigidly ahead, a penitent voice murmured:

“I'm sorry, Tom. Please let me steer, won't you?”

“Very well, sir.”

“And don’t be so ill-tempered . . . why don’t you light up your pipe? I know you’d be happier.”

Tom knew he would too, but he also knew enough about the proprieties not to smoke beside his employer on the bridge. Another yacht was coming up the channel. This one the *Gleam* passed sedately and without a quiver from her course.

They had passed Cat Island and the Gooseberries and Tom pointed out ahead of them the Eastern Point lighthouse on the southernmost tip of Cape Ann. “We can run well outside to-day,” he decided. “Sea’s like a mill-pond. Pretty soon we shall pass Thatcher’s twin lights and then run straight for the Isles of Shoals—unless you’d like to put in to Gloucester harbor for lunch?”

Frances and Cousin Phoebe voted for Gloucester but Brother Emerson informed them decisively that the plan was to get straight on, as far as they could toward the island goal by nightfall. Tom didn’t care though he thought it a pity for them to miss Gloucester. For himself it was enough to be moving across summer seas in the good old *Vagabond*. He felt happier than he had in

months. The gay young voices beside him were comforting after his loneliness and the sense of responsibility for the yacht and its party was stimulating. They were making good time and ought to reach Portland well before dark. And to-morrow they would be at Monhegan.

But by one o'clock he began to worry about the weather. He didn't like the look of it. Not for a long run to Portland. Tom had stood at the wheel of the *Vagabond* for hours at a time but always old Saunders had been in charge of the yacht, directing the course. Maine harbors are ticklish places to get into unless one is sure of his channels and the more good daylight the skipper can count on, the better. Tom got out the charts and studied them intently.

"There ought to be another one of Portland harbor," he remembered, eyes searching in the locker. "A chart torn across the middle ——"

"There is one like that down in the cabin," spoke up Cousin Phœbe. "I was going to throw it away. I saw it while I was tidying up here yesterday and thought it wasn't any good."

"Will you get it, Frances, please?" Brother Emerson's voice had a crisp note, at the wheel. Frances brought the chart and spread it out on

the table in front of the wheel. Sure enough, there was a long tear down the middle of the chart. Tom inwardly cursed his unguarded tongue but since nobody made any comment on his slip he devoutly hoped it had passed unnoticed.

A little later when he was slapping sandwiches together in the galley (with one eye out of a port for he had not unlimited confidence in his helmsman) he heard a conversation on the bridge above. The speakers evidently did not realize how much their voices had to be raised above the hum of the engine.

“Phœbe, have you had him in the cabin for anything?”

“Why should I, dearie? We attend to the tidying up in the cabins ourselves.”

“I thought perhaps you might have called him in for something.”

“No, I didn’t—why, Em?”

“Nothing. But he hasn’t any business in the cabin, you know.”

“What’s the matter, Em?” asked Frances. “Anything wrong?”

“Fran, didn’t you notice? *He had seen that chart before.* Phœbe carried it down to the cabin yesterday before he came aboard.”

“Em! you don’t suppose he could have been sent by ——”

“Ssh—I don’t know. I can’t think there has been time for that. But you two be mighty careful what you say before him ——”

“Good land!” complained Cousin Phœbe, “as if my tongue wasn’t half paralyzed now, turnin’ off things I start to say and then recollect I mustn’t.”

“And until I’m sure,” continued the lovely contralto of Brother Emerson, “I’m not going into any harbors he suggests first. We’ll pick out harbors he doesn’t mention—we can study those charts as well as he can. And we won’t stay long enough to give him a chance to do any telephoning on shore.”

Frances sighed. “Oh, dear! I liked him so much ——”

Contralto came back at that. “I like him too—a lot. But I’m not going to take chances. It’s too serious.”

The handy-man, tripping awkwardly and audibly on the steps, appeared with a plate of sandwiches and a tray of iced coffee glasses.

“Tom, what shore is that over there? An island?” Brother Emerson pointed eastward.

“It’s no shore.” Tom had taken the wheel and was looking, himself, a bit anxiously out to the place where sky and sea met. “That’s fog. Heavy fog too, ready to roll in after the sun goes down.”

“Why, it’s a perfect day,” objected Cousin Phœbe.

“Hazy,” pronounced the handy-man. “And getting thicker every minute too. To tell you the truth,” he looked about at them all, “unless you people are particularly anxious to make Portland to-night I’d strongly advise running back to Marblehead, or putting in to Gloucester harbor and lying over until to-morrow morning.”

“I will *not*.” The manly voice of Brother Emerson rose dangerously near a feminine squeak.

“But dearie,” Cousin Phœbe glanced apprehensively at the low gray line off to eastward, “you wouldn’t want to run into danger ——”

“Danger—piffle! A little fog. If our experienced man who claims to be perfectly capable of running this boat—I believe that was your claim yesterday, Tom?—is afraid of a slight mist ——”

“Won’t be any slight mist,” asserted Tom to whom this taunt was naturally unpleasant. “Unless I am much mistaken that is heavy fog hang-

ing out there and I'm not keen about risking the long run to Portland in any fog."

"Whose risk is it—yours or mine?" The *Gleam's* owner looked gently at the unfortunate employee.

"Em, do consider what Tom says," begged Frances nervously. "You said you would give him full charge of running the boat. We don't know anything about ocean fogs——"

The brown eyes flashed a warning at Frances. "Why don't we? I for one know all about ocean fogs and I can see this one doesn't amount to anything. We've started for Portland and I'm going to Portland. I'll take the wheel now, Tom. You can go below and eat your lunch."

"Very well, sir," said the handy-man. "You will pick up Isles of Shoals presently—unless the haze gets too thick."

As Tom turned from the wheel Frances tossed part of her sandwich toward Ming. The bit of bread flew down the steps to the deck and the little dog, leaping after his tidbit, lost his footing, slid across the deck and under the rail, and as the yacht rolled on a long ground swell, over went the Peke into the sea.

"Ming! Ming! Oh, my little dog!" The

girl who had lately been so imperious darted to the rail of the bridge, anguish in her voice. Without one instant's consideration and before anyone had an inkling of her mad intention she had leaped into forty fathoms of Atlantic ocean.

CHAPTER X

PEOPLE unacquainted with the northern Massachusetts coast have no conception how cold the sea can be there in summer time. Its temperature, even in mid-August and along the sun-warmed beaches seldom rises above sixty degrees, and frequently registers less than fifty-four. Tom knew that in this early month of summer the water, so far out from shore, would be of an icy coldness that might well imperil the strongest swimmer.

His first impulse, of course, was to leap overboard to the assistance of the girl, but he realized that with no one controlling the yacht there would be small chance for swimmers in the water. He must not only get to her as quickly as possible but must also have the yacht where he could put her speedily back on board. Fervently he wished for another man, or for an experienced yachtswoman. Cousin Phœbe and Frances were worse than useless in the emergency. The stout lady, with clutching hands, was hanging over the rail and

shrieking incoherently. And Frances clinging to his arm was demanding frantically why he did not stop the yacht. What was he doing—leaving Emily to drown?

The *Gleam* had already run some distance past the spot where the girl had struck the water. Struggling in the foamy wake behind them she did appear in hapless plight and without much chance. But Tom had seen instantly that she was an expert swimmer. He thanked his stars for that. With tight-set teeth he was swinging the yacht in a circle. He flung off the clutching grip of Frances.

“Stop that screaming. Listen to me: can you and your cousin get that tender off the davits and into the water?”

“I don’t know,” wailed Frances. And—from Cousin Phœbe at the rail, “She’s sinking. Emily’s sinking. Oh, do something!”

“Of course you can’t,” snapped Tom. “Then do this: get the port life-buoy. Cut the lashings. Do you hear me? Keep hold of yourself; it depends on you as much as on me. Get that buoy free—do you understand?”

Stooped over his wheel with eyes straining through the thickening mist at the small, dark

speck now ahead as the *Gleam* came up on the new course, Tom turned for a brief second and held the distraught gaze of Frances with his steady gray glance. She nodded.

“Then run to the bow where that coil of rope is. Tie one end of the rope to the buoy and make the rope fast to the rail. When we come opposite her throw the buoy as far as you can. Then watch and be ready to do what I tell you next.”

Frances nodded again, this time competently, and ran aft toward the big canvas-covered life-buoy that hung at the port side. They were heading straight toward the swimmer now. She was moving very little in the water; just enough Tom thought to keep her blood from congealing, and at intervals she was treading water and gazing toward the oncoming yacht. Tom's heart leaped at her skill and strength. A game little sport as well as a splendid swimmer, that girl.

“Ready!”

Tom shouted to Frances who was standing with the life-buoy balanced across the rail. He reversed his engine. Shut it off. And as the yacht shivered to a stop almost in her own length, he plunged overboard.

“I've got Ming,” gasped the girl as he came up,

pushing ahead of him' the floating buoy. "I thought you'd never come."

"I'm here," said Tom and his arm went strongly round her and around the limp little dog clutched in her arm. "Steady now. You're all right. Put your hand on the buoy—that's the girl. Let me do the work. You're all right now ——"

"I'm so co-o-old."

"I know. But you're going to be all warm and comfy in a minute. Buck up now. You're a brave little girl."

Then he roared to Frances. "Never mind hauling in. Get the steps down. Steady does it. That's right. Good girl. . . ."

It was a very meek Brother Emerson who staggered, supported by the handy-man's arm, aboard the *Gleam*. Quite obviously, in the clinging, soaked garments no boy at all but a very collapsed, badly frightened slip of a girl. The big cap had long since been washed from her head and closely coiled hair dragged from its fastenings. It hung, soaked and dripping, below her waist. Frances and Cousin Phoebe had their arms about her instantly with feminine pettings and purrings about her bravery and her foolishness.

"Em, darling," chattered Frances, almost hys-

terical between tears and laughter, "will you never learn to think, before you do the first thing that comes into your head? Tom could have rescued Ming."

Emily, leaning against the side of the deck house, cuddled the dog in her arms. "He's almost dead," she whimpered. "His little body is so c-cold."

Here the handy-man took charge. "Get her between blankets and if you have a drop of whiskey aboard now's the time to use it. A good big swig of it. I'm going to let the boat drift a bit while I make some hot coffee. Don't waste a minute; get her warm somehow and into bed."

He turned to run toward the galley but a wet little hand caught at his arm. Brown eyes looked up into his.

"Tom—I'm sorry. And—and please take us back to Marblehead for to-night."

"Right," agreed the handy-man. And dashed for his galley.

By the time the *Gleam* slipped into the channel south of Cat Island the fog had come rolling in, a dense gray curtain that shut out the Beverly shore and dimmed the nearer vista of trees and lawns on Marblehead Neck. When he swung

round the harbor buoys he could just make out a white wash of surf on jagged rocks to port. He breathed a sigh of relief when he had the anchor over and the *Gleam* swung safely round into position. Swede or Jap or whosoever for room-fellow, he was not going to take that yacht out again without efficient help on board.

Of course they ought to have put in at Gloucester. All foolishness, the hour's run back to Marblehead. But even while expressing contrition for her witless escapade and thanking him with her eyes for saving her from its consequences she had not trusted him enough to let him choose the overnight anchorage. A perverse and wilful girl. And spoiled! Not the sort of girl Tom MacLeod admired at all. He liked frank, outspoken, sensible girls—comradely girls with no nonsense about them. Like that Frances one for instance. *She* wouldn't have been fool enough to leap into the Atlantic ocean for a Peke dog that could have been picked up with a boat hook.

How lovely Miss Puzzled was though. In that red Chinese coat the night his torch had flashed over her. And to-day, wet garments a-cling and hair all dank and dark around her little white face as she whispered "I'm sorry." How soft and

pliant and *little* her body had felt in his arms and how she had yielded herself to him out there in the sea. Her arms had gone around his neck (he could feel them clinging now!) when he carried her up the steps.

And how she loved her dog. Not a thought of self when the thing dear to her was imperiled.

— And her mischievous laugh at his glum inability to take what she meant as teasing in tolerant spirit. But pulling a yacht across channel at a ticklish moment as a joke! He could have shaken her—until her eyes had sought his with penitent appeal.

No, she was a fascinating bit of femininity but not his kind of girl. Too impetuous and too spoiled. Sweetness didn't cut any figure with him unless there was good sense behind it. She was sweet only to get her own way. She had probably been the kind of little girl who nagged for attention: "Mother. Mother. Mother! . . . Mother *dear*." And got what she was after. There had been a kid like that on the steamer coming over and Tom had hated her.

He changed his wet clothes for dry ones and was glad to warm up in the galley, preparing dinner. No complications to-night; the handsome

porterhouse and sliced potatoes browning in butter sent savory odors wafting through the yacht.

Frances came to the swing door of the galley and carried laden trays to the aft cabin. Ports were closed against the chill dampness outside and the cabin was bright and cozy with rose-shaded lights.

To the handy-man who, astride a camp-stool, was making away with the tail of the porterhouse and a pint of hot coffee, came Cousin Phœbe with announcement that after he had finished washing up here his presence was desired in the cabin.

“Now what?” cogitated Tom as he rattled the last piece of table silver into a drawer. He went forward to his cubby in the bow, slicked his hair and gave careful attention to his hands and then walked aft along the slippery deck to the cockpit. Voices on other yachts had a muffled sound and the anchor lantern on the mast gave but a dim saffron glow. But it was snug and safe here in harbor. Tom felt very thankful that he was not, at this moment, picking a precarious way around Cape Elizabeth and squinting into the murk to discover Portland Head Light.

He knocked at the door of the cabin and Cousin

Phœbe's voice bade him come in. She was sitting under one of the lamps busy with a piece of needlework, the bit of sheer linen awkwardly held by fingers of the bandaged arm while the other hand expertly wielded her needle. Frances was curled on the port transom with a book. But Tom scarcely saw either of them. His eyes went straight to the girl on the starboard transom. Not Brother Emerson in the boy's suit and cap but Miss Puzzled in her coral and gold mandarin jacket.

Wrapped in the gorgeous Chinese coat she made a vivid picture against the dark walnut paneling behind her. Her face was in shadow but the light of the swinging lamp struck coppery gleams in the long braids that trailed into her lap and brought out the red and gold of her negligee. A deep-toned rug was spread across her knees and on the rug her hands were folded. Ming, snoozing comfortably, was beside her.

"Shut the door, Tom," she directed, "and please sit down, won't you?"

The handy-man obediently dropped on a cushioned bench at one side of the companion,—and not one of the feminine eyes fixed on him but remarked the way he did it. Not at all as one of

his humble station might be expected to seat himself when suddenly bidden by his employer.

“Now, Tom,” said the girl in the mandarin coat, “you are on this boat for some purpose. I want to know what it is.”

CHAPTER XI

THAT abrupt order to explain his business was not at all what Mr. MacLeod had expected.

Graceful thanks perhaps for his rescue stunt of the afternoon he had anticipated. Or maybe apologetic explanation of the Brother Emerson disguise. Perhaps the whole story confided to him with appeal to his chivalrous protection. Instead he was bluntly informed that he was an object of suspicion.

But in the unsmiling gaze fixed on him there seemed to be something wistful. She wanted to believe in him, her eyes said. Tom gave her back straight look for straight look.

“I told you last night, Miss Jameson—I suppose I may say ‘Miss Jameson’ now ——?” She nodded, seeming to brush this aside as unimportant. “—that I was without funds and took advantage of your advertisement to land a job.”

“You also told me last night that you had never been on this boat before.”

“Pardon. What you asked, Miss Jameson, was whether I had been aboard the *Gleam*. I said no.”

Frances leaned forward from the opposite transom. "And the *Vagabond*?"

"I have been aboard the *Vagabond*, yes."

"I told you so!" murmured Frances, sitting back.

"Fran, let me do the talking, please. When were you on the *Vagabond*, Tom?"

"Some years ago. I cruised in her for several weeks."

"As an employee?"

"Well, I helped look after the engine and sometimes I took the wheel, and I nipped back and forth with the tender——"

"Sort of an assistant on board?" she suggested.

"Sort of," admitted Tom. His glance had lifted a fraction of an inch above the girl's head. A small but perfectly cut swastika was quite plainly discernible in the paneling between the ports. That was the place. . . .

"I asked you"—a remark was evidently being repeated and Tom hastily transferred his attention from the swastika to his employer—"whether you are willing to swear to me—*swear* to me that you have no personal interest in this yacht."

"How do you mean—personal interest?" asked Tom guardedly.

“I mean: do you own this boat?”

Tom sat up straight. A ghastly possibility occurred to him. Suppose these women, running away from something or somebody, had coolly made off with the *Vagabond*—and Mr. MacLeod included in the merry party! He recalled the painting activities of yesterday: *Vagabond* painted out and *Gleam* painted in. And the abject terror of his charges when that launch had appeared alongside.

Tom had a queer, gone feeling at the pit of his stomach.

“Miss Jameson! Am I to understand you do not own this yacht and don’t know who does?”

Under the stern accusation in his eyes the girl’s face suddenly relaxed, dropped some of its anxiety.

“I told you he had nothing to do with it,” murmured Cousin Phœbe, lifting her work and biting off an end of thread. “Tom, *I* believe in you. Even when you remembered about the torn chart I knew there was some explanation.”

Young Tom thanked the stout lady with a glance for her championship. It made him a little ashamed. Why should he, in the face of such confidence, harbor mean suspicions? Come to think of it, his attitude from the moment he had

come on board had been suspicious. His eyes went back to the girl in the mandarin coat. Poor little badgered thing!—anxiety and fear were what made her suspicious of him; he had no such excuse.

“I think,” he told her, “something is troubling you very much. And I am sorry if I have added to your concern. I certainly don’t own this boat and I have no reason for being here that could endanger you in any way. Nobody sent me here. I came in answer to your ad. I had the summer before me and when I saw a chance to cruise on the old *Vagabond* again I jumped at it. And now I am here, if there is any way I can serve you I want to. Perhaps,” he smiled at her, “if you will tell me what it is you are afraid of I could help you better.”

Emily Jameson followed every word, eyes on his face. Never had he seen such eyes. Wide apart, softly dark under their straight brows. But haunted eyes, shadowed by more strain and worry than a girl so young should have to bear.

When he had finished she sat back against her cushions and for the first time unclasped her locked hands.

“I can’t tell you all about it, Tom. But I do

trust you now. I think the *Gleam* is my boat. I—I hope it is ——”

“But you are not sure?”

“I know it was my boat. I saw the bill of sale. But I am not of age till this September and my—my trustee bought the yacht for me ——”

“When was this?”

“Several months ago. What I am afraid of is that quite recently maybe he may have sold the boat to somebody else. Could he do that?”

“Doesn’t he consult you about investments of your money?”

“Why no, he never has—I never bothered. But he did know I was crazy to keep the yacht.”

“I should think the quickest and best way to find out how matters stand would be to write or wire him.” Tom had a thought. “Doesn’t he know you are on board the yacht?”

She looked at Frances, whose expression very distinctly said, “Have a care!”

“You see,” Emily explained to Tom, “he’s in Europe. I can’t get in touch with him.”

“But how did you get possession of the boat? The shipyard people would not give it up to you unless they were satisfied it was your boat ——”

“Oh, I managed that all right,” she assured him,

and this time looked at Cousin Phœbe. "What I am afraid of is that the boat may have been sold to someone quite recently, after I left—left ——"

"Left home," prompted Frances.

"After I left home, yes."

"But haven't you papers on board to prove that, so far as you know, the yacht is yours?"

She looked at Cousin Phœbe again. "You ought to have thought of that."

"Couldn't think of everything," mumbled the stout lady.

"But what reason have you," Tom asked, "to think the boat has been sold to anybody?"

Emily leaned forward and dropped her voice. "Two nights ago, in Boston harbor, somebody came aboard the yacht. Cousin Phœbe had not joined us then ——"

"And you two girls were alone on board!"

"Oh, I scared him off—with my revolver. He went fast enough. But it wasn't a pleasant experience."

"I should say not!" declared Mr. MacLeod indignantly. "Did—did you get a look at his face?"

"No, our lights were out and he crouched behind an electric torch. We thought he was just a

sneak thief. But afterward it came to me that he had tried to open the cabin door with a key. That set me thinking. And he said a very queer thing ——”

“What was that?”

“He said something about its being his boat. After he had gone I began to wonder if he could be someone my—my trustee had sold the boat to. Then you came aboard and we could see you were not a real handy-man at all; and those melon spoons and the torn chart showed us plainly that you had been on the yacht before . . . well, you see, Tom, I couldn’t help being worried.”

The best way to meet all this seemed with a hearty laugh. So thereupon Mr. MacLeod laughed right heartily—though his chortle, to himself, sounded a trifle hollow. “I give you my word, Miss Jameson,” he said, “that I haven’t the money to buy this boat even if it was offered to me. I have a job waiting for me September fifteenth; until that time,” he smiled around at them, “I hope to take good care of you so we can all enjoy a jolly cruise.”

Emily still had a worried look. “But that man in the launch this morning ——”

“I’m pretty sure that chap was a newspaper

reporter after harbor notes. If anybody has bought the boat, unknown to you, he'll come after it in a more direct way—and he'll have to prove his claim. Meanwhile I would strongly advise your getting in touch with your trustee, or with his office if he is in Europe, and finding out exactly how matters stand.”

Tom rose, since Emily had risen as though to end the interview.

“There is something I want to ask,” he added. “Would you people be willing to have another man on board?”

His employer frowned. “What for?”

“This is a pretty big boat for one person to handle ——”

“I thought,” she was still frowning, “it was what they call a ‘one man control’ ——”

“The engine is. And probably one man could run the engine and also attend to the mooring if there happened to be a quiet sea and he had plenty of room. But something might happen again,—like to-day, or we might strike a bad storm. I'd feel safer to have help on board for a long cruise. Even a young lad would do, anybody who could hop about and be able to take the wheel in an emergency.

"You can take his pay out of my wages," suggested Tom as she hesitated.

Nonsense, she said to that. The money did not matter; it was the delay about getting off while a helper was hunted up. Tom said he could run down to Boston next morning and find somebody, but this plan was sharply negatived by his charges. They would not be left alone on the yacht. So it was decided that Tom should try to pick up someone in Marblehead. Plenty of kids around sixteen who'd come along almost for nothing and be tickled to death at the chance, Tom told them. The main thing, his employer stated, was to get away from here by noon so they could make Portland before dark.

"Wait a minute," she halted the handy-man as he was about to start up the companion steps, "I'm coming out on deck with you, Tom. I want a word with you."

She walked ahead of Tom to the bridge. So thick hung the fog curtain that they were all but invisible to each other. The yacht rocked on the long ground-swell and the anchor lantern on the mast was an orange blur behind luminous drifting mist.

She wanted to thank him, she said, for what he

had done that day. She didn't know why she had attempted such a senseless thing as to leap overboard. "I'm always doing things like that," she confessed,—“ anything I want to do at the minute, and then being sorry afterward because it puts somebody else in difficulty. All I thought of to-day was Ming. He—he does mean so much to me.”

Tom made light of the matter. "I could have been with you five seconds after you struck the water if there had been anybody on board to handle the boat. I knew you could not keep up for long in that icy water, even though you swim so well, and if I had left the yacht without anybody to stop her engine or bring her around ——"

"I understand that. If it weren't for you I'd be at the bottom of the Atlantic right now ——"

"And I wish I were!" she finished. "I wish I were!"

"Miss Jameson ——"

She got hold of herself instantly. "Oh, things will work out some way," she said. He could not see, in the fog, but he thought she was wiping her eyes. After a minute she spoke again. "I won't go back. Nobody can make me. Tom!—take me to that island where I'll be safe for a while.

They'll come, I suppose, but I want to have a little time to think out what to do, before they find me. That's why I took the yacht. I knew—out at sea, I'd be safe for a while. I can't tell you about it, Tom ——”

“It's none of my business,” Tom answered quietly. “I just want to know what to look out for, that's all. There is something you are afraid of, beside a possible purchaser of the boat turning up?”

“Something much worse. Something”—she spoke through shut teeth—“more than I could bear.”

“Whatever it is,” assured Mr. MacLeod valiantly, “I won't let it come near you.”

Her voice came to him, very low. “I'll tell you why I changed the yacht's name to *Gleam*. It's because I hope to find, on this cruise—within the next few weeks, some gleam of light to show me the way in a terribly dark place. Will—will you help me, Tom?”

“You bet I will!” said young Tom MacLeod earnestly.

Thus it was that again to-night two hands touched in seal of cordial good fellowship.

He was guiding her along the fog-soaked deck

under the galley window and cautioning her to be careful about slipping when suddenly she paused, hands clinging to the rail, and laughed softly.

“You see I *know* you didn’t happen on this boat by chance, Tom.”

“I saw the ad ——”

“Yes, and I saw something else.” She slid her hand along the rail to where his left hand rested. They were directly below the riding lantern now and were dimly visible to each other.

“This,” she said, and touched with a finger-tip the ring Tom was wearing,—an unusual ring with an oval of deep blue lapis entwined in silver serpents. He had picked it up in India for Cliff.

“I saw that ring on a hand beckoning to me through some Pullman berth curtains.”

Mr. MacLeod was speechless.

“They don’t know.” She moved her head in the direction of the aft cabin. “I wonder myself why I didn’t tell them at once—but I didn’t. At first I was worried. When you came aboard yesterday I was afraid you might be somebody sent to spy on me and that you had been following me in the train. I decided the best thing, as long as you were here, was to keep you aboard a while and find out for sure.”

“And are you sure now?”

She nodded gravely.

“Yes, I’m sure now.” Then she laughed mischievously. “You see I understand it was all your deep interest in—Ming.”

“Exactly.” Tom’s eyes twinkled too. “Growlo it was. After he took such a fancy to me I simply couldn’t give him up.”

CHAPTER XII

TOM and the Peke, next morning, stretched their legs on Marblehead Neck. It was pleasanter to swing along over the hard, wide roads than to blunder through the tortuous streets of old Marblehead, for the fog still hung thick and nothing twenty feet away was clearly visible. Tom wore his oilskin slicker and occasionally Growlo rode in its deep pocket. They had climbed the stairs from the ferry dock and cut down past the Eastern Yacht Club clear to the causeway, then back along the seaward side where gardens of fine estates, on a brighter day, would have shown blazing patches of color against a background of far-stretching sea.

But this morning the ramblers and roses and petunia borders were dim, as though layers of misty gray chiffon had been flung over them, and except for the smash of breakers against the cliffs there was no hint of the wide-stretching Atlantic. Tom had a love of wild and desolate places, of being alone in them. He enjoyed big things—mountains at sunset, dawn on the sea, stars at

night, better that way than with a companion who had not the gift of silence, and like most people whose lives have been lonely got things out of solitude that the gregarious never know.

He climbed down to a ledge that ran out under the shelter of a giant cliff, lighted his pipe and sat for an hour watching the boil and fret of the sea against the rocks. Tons of sea, roaring, tearing in; washing over boulders that lifted sleek black crowns out of the receding waters to be immediately engulfed again. Green, fearfully deep looking seas heaving up in chasms among the cliffs and then withdrawing in swirls of sudsy foam. Giant waves that crashed against the unconquerable granite, clouds of spray shooting thirty feet in air.

Tom, motionless, smoked his pipe and reassured with comforting ear-scratchings small Growlo who slunk, terrified, in the depths of the slicker pocket.

What must she have thought, knowing all the time about that ring, when he appeared as an applicant for the handy-man job? Lucky for him that she had not recognized him that night he climbed aboard in Boston harbor—had not suspected him of being that sort of bounder in his effort to get acquainted. His applying for the job of handy-man had merely amused her. Of

course a girl like that, as beautiful as she was, would be used to having chaps follow her, trying to scrape acquaintance. He hadn't been offensive in that way and his willingness to accept the humble position of employee on her yacht in order to be near her she took as a sort of tribute that didn't surprise her in any way. She was amused by it! Sure of herself. Sure of her charm. A rich girl, spoiled. Accepting adoration as her due. She took it as a piece of luck probably that his adoration had brought him along as so timely a protector.

She could make use of him and he could go on adoring—but at a proper distance. She had hardly spoken to him this morning when he had waited on her at breakfast. Toting grub up to the bridge—sort of outdoor picnic suggestion—was one thing; waiting on an indoor breakfast table was another. He wished he could tell these people about the real reason for his being aboard the yacht. He'd like that girl to know he had a reason beyond tagging after herself. But it would be disloyal to Celia to confide her secret to these chance acquaintances. He wasn't going to search behind that panel in presence of curious eyes. Some secret of Celia's past, sacred to her son,

might be concerned. No one must know about that message behind the panel but himself.

The tide was nearing the full and showers of icy spray drove Tom from his ledge. He knocked out his pipe, climbed to the top of the cliff and stood undecided whether to continue his stroll or take the road back to the ferry dock where he had left his tender. It was only ten o'clock, nothing to do aboard until luncheon time and, though the fog was lifting a bit, no hope of leaving harbor to-day. He might as well get more exercise while he had the chance. He swung southward and climbed down to a flat beach where breakers were rolling up in long lines of surf. Good place for Growlo to have a run.

Growlo had a scramble instead of a run, for the beach was not of sand but of stones—most of them the size of hen's eggs. The waves tore up the steep incline and withdrew, sucking back the giant pebbles with a sound gruesomely like the rattle of bones. A dismal enough spot, in this fog. Suddenly the Peke, appalling growls proceeding from his tiny chest, disappeared around a jutting corner of cliff.

"Hello, Man Friday!" sang out a plaintive voice. Tom hurried after the dog. Close against

the cliff sat an extremely desolate looking being: a young man, hatless and huddled in wet clothes and holding carefully on his knees a tin dispatch box.

“Gosh,” he said to Tom, “it’s good to see a human being on this desert island.”

If he hadn’t been so wet and forlorn he would have been a personable young chap. Tom noted that his clothes were good, if soaked and shapeless. The drenched shirt under the soggy coat was of silk and a jewel-studded fraternity pin was attached to the shirt. But the wan face had a stubble of beard and the young man’s eyes were red-rimmed. These eyes peered up at Tom in the strained way of near-sighted eyes bereft of glasses.

“Haven’t a cigarette about you?” asked the youth hopefully.

“Sorry, only this pipe. But there’s a shop not ten minutes’ walk from here where they have plenty.”

“The deuce you say. Where on earth am I?”

“Marblehead Neck.”

“For the lovva Mike!”

“What happened to you?” asked Tom.

A languid hand directed attention to the beach

further along. Piled up on the shingle was the wreck of a sailboat. Washing about in the surf were bits of torn away rigging.

“You lost your boat?”

“See for yourself,” responded the young man dismally. “Lost my way in that fog yesterday. Prowled around looking for a channel till dark caught me. Thought I was off Cape Ann somewhere. Then smashed my rudder and the tide got me. First thing I knew I was pilin’ up on this beach. Lucky for me it was down here and not against that bunch of cliffs. Lost my glasses but I saved *this*.” He touched the tin box on his knees. “Must have been flood tide—about ten o’clock last night, I guess.”

“And you’ve been here ever since?”

“Went to sleep. Kind of all in I was, after I climbed out of those billows. Some undertow, my word! Been awake an hour or so but my watch is on the blink.” He got up stiffly and returned Tom’s concerned gaze with a genial grin. “If there’s anybody beside yourself on this fog-bound coast, brother, what’s the prospect for a cup of coffee and some dry duds?”

Something in his grin and in the way he held his shoulders as he stood erect made Tom look

at him more closely. "Say, don't I know you?"

"Maybe you do. I'm not famous yet but I'm goin' to be. You might have a clairvoyant eye. Hello ——" he squinted at Tom through the near-sighted eyes. "I do seem to recollect you, old bean. Le's see: football outfit, black and orange legs." He smote his forehead. "Braceley prep! You're MacLeod who did that kick back in 1914 ——"

"And you are ——"

"Oh, you wouldn't remember me. I was a kid freshman and you were a chesty senior. First year old Doc Havens was headmaster—remember? Top hole you were, lent me your canoe ——"

"I remember. Young Renny."

"Renny it is. What'd you do afterward, MacLeod? Going on to Tech, weren't you?"

Tom seized the young man by the arm. "We can chin about all that later. Man, your teeth are chattering. Come along now and get something hot inside you."

At the top of the cliff young Renny turned and looked back at the hopeless wreck of a sailboat.

"The old *Skimmer's* a goner." He sighed. "Dunno what I'll do with my summer now."

Following what seemed afterward a heaven-sent inspiration, Mr. MacLeod put a question:

“Say, can you cook?”

The castaway could. In fact, he solemnly asseverated, not even Frenchy at the Waldorf had anything on him in the culinary line.

An affectionate arm was laid across Mr. Renny's shivering shoulders.

“You come along with me, my boy. Your summer's taken care of.”

CHAPTER XIII

“OF course it’s a man,” decided Mr. Renny.

Warmed and fed and comfortably enjoying a cigarette (one of Brother Emerson’s) he reclined under a striped Indian blanket on one of the bunks in the crew’s cubby and regarded the handyman affably. “What for would she be running away and hiding like this—in that bally boy’s suit that wouldn’t fool anybody—unless it’s from some man?”

“Why a man particularly?” Tom frowned at the idea. “Why not a hateful stepmother? Or an old early-Vic father objecting to some modern kind of career?”

“Don’t kid yourself, old boy, that isn’t the species of femmynyne who is agonizing after any career,—not with those ‘follow-me’ eyes. And why would a girl with income enough to sport a boat like this one be worrying about any stepmother? No, I’m telling you it’s some man.”

“Well,” Tom was filling his pipe, “if it is, she’s trying to get away from him.” Comfort in this thought.

Young Renny's eyes twinkled. So that was how the wind set—already! he whispered to himself.

“Anyhow, MacLeod ——”

“Easy on the MacLeod, old chap. Better stick to ‘Tom.’”

“Tom it is. Anyhow I like the little one best.”

“Oh, you do?”

“Yep. Not so much cha-arm maybe, as Brown-Eyes, and not near so much pulchritude. But better tempered I bet you. And easier managed. And nothing on *her* mind, either, to keep her awake nights. Me for little sister Fran.”

“You understand, Renny,” warned the handyman, “we are merely employees on this boat. If they are kind enough to be civil and friendly to us ——”

“I get you.” The *Gleam's* newly engaged steward grinned appreciatively. Then his merry eyes became serious again. “I'm not taking it as a lark but as an Allah-sent bit of luck to make up for the loss of my old *Skimmer*. And I'm going to stand by those three just as much as you are, and help 'em any way I can. Besides,” he reached over and touched the tin dispatch box tenderly, “I'll be busy.”

There had been a conclave in the aft cabin, Brother Emerson presiding; and the castaway in a suit of the crew's (breeches and sleeves well rolled up) had related his story. He too, it transpired, was avoiding recognition ashore. Because of a clash of opinions, parental determination having been set upon a career (beginning at the bottom) in the three-generation established pickle factory down near Philadelphia, young Mr. Renny was for the moment on his own in pursuit of art and self-expression. A small avuncular legacy received just before his graduation from college would, he thought, take him through the summer and a congenial itinerant existence had been made possible by the possession of a beloved sailboat.

Mr. Renny was writing a play. And parental opinion, it seemed, was contemptuous of all such avocations and insultingly doubtful about young Mr. Renny's ability in any case. But as the potential dramatist pointed out to his good friends aboard the *Gleam* it was only fair for him to have a try at it before attaching himself for life to pickles. If he did make good, he argued, he could bid farewell forever to the loathed prospect of pickling. If he didn't, he would go to work in

the factory in September and not much time lost. Anyhow he was going to have his chance. If the old man caught the playwright he would be quite capable of burning up the play, but pursuing a nomadic existence along the waterways of far-away Massachusetts young Mr. Renny felt he was fairly safe from being nabbed.

“When the *Skimmer* smashed up,” he asserted, looking with his nice pleading boy’s eyes at Cousin Phœbe whom he had taken to be the presumable head of the yacht’s party and arbiter of his fate, “I thought I was done for. I’ve a shack and a typewriter up here along the shore a ways, but I dassent hang round there daytimes. The old man is mighty determined when he goes after anything. And it has been his dream to get me in that pickle factory since he thanked God for one boy after four girls.”

“Where are the girls?” asked Frances interestedly.

“All married—and not one of their hubbies would go in for pickles. I’m Dad’s last hope.”

“Couldn’t you,” inquired Cousin Phœbe, “manage to please your father and do your play too? I mean: pickle daytimes and write in the evening?”

Mr. Renny's eyes sought the cabin ceiling. "Good Gosh!" whispered he.

Here the arbiter of all their fates took hold. "I think he is perfectly right," insisted Brother Emerson. "Everybody has a right to live his own life and express himself the way he wants to. If old people interfere it's just their selfishness. Mr. Renny, you stay with us on the *Gleam* and finish your play. Where's that shack and your typewriter?"

"Up Indian River—not far from Ipswich."

"Do you know the way, Tom?"

"I can find it," assured the handy-man, "if there's a channel deep enough for the yacht."

"Very well, we'll stop there to-morrow, on our way to Maine. Tom, you can run the yacht and Mr. Renny can look after the galley and whatever is fair I'll pay you both. You talk it over and decide."

"Oh, forget about that part of it," protested Mr. Renny airily. "It's a corking lark for me to be aboard this yacht—and mighty good of you people to take me along. I don't want wages——"

"But *Tom* does," insisted Brother Emerson with an unfathomable glance at the handy-man.

“Tom says the only reason he is on this yacht is because he is broke.”

Mr. MacLeod rose from the companion steps where he had been sitting. “I think a business arrangement will be most satisfactory all round. Renny, if you’ll come with me now I’ll show you about that galley stove. Sometimes it needs coaxing.”

“I suppose,” remarked the steward reflectively as he manipulated oven draughts and lifted stove lids, “you are thinking it would be safer—in case this boat does belong to somebody else and there happens to be trouble—for you and me to be just paid employees jumpin’ round in white ducks?”

“Something like that maybe,” responded the handy-man.

Luncheon clinched the matter, so far as the new steward was concerned. Chicken à la King, crisp rolls and a salad with Roquefort cheese dressing persuaded the thrilled occupants of the deck house that this treasure must be retained at any price. Mr. Renny’s place on the *Gleam* was secure. And the jolly way he handed plates and slid up and down the galley steps was most diverting.

The fog was breaking away now. Shore lines

appeared through a luminous silver mist and a light breeze ruffled the harbor. Pennants on the yachts glowed in brilliant patches of color and blue water reflected dancing sunbeams. Tom was untying the dinghy's painter and young Renny, now in his dry but badly crumpled suit, was coming down the deck from the crew's cubby when Frances sprang up from her chair on the bridge.

“I've simply got to have some exercise. I'm going along.”

Cousin Phœbe looked alarmed and Emily turned sharply with evident intent to veto this pleasant plan. Then the brown eyes softened and gazed wistfully at the Marblehead shore. “All right, Fran, I can't blame you. But do be careful and if you have the least reason to think—you know!—don't risk coming back here until dark. And keep the others with you.”

Frances dashed to the cabin and returned with a handful of letters. She asked Tom if he had a large envelope and when he brought it she slipped her letters in and borrowing Tom's fountain pen scribbled an address on the envelope. Letters to be mailed by somebody from somewhere, was the handy-man's conclusion—which was correct. But

Frances posted the envelope herself and he did not discover its destination.

The handy-man had a keen sense of what was proper in yacht etiquette (if no one else had) and he knew it was not for him, in duck jumper and saucer cap, to stroll sociably in company with his betters. Though his sailorman's ducks were fresh and spotless and the sad habiliments of Mr. Renny obviously indicated an overnight set-to with something or somebody, Mr. Renny could blithely escort the lady into a fascinating gift-shop retrieved from an ancient sail loft and lounge beside her on a stool at the drug-store soda fountain while a humble handy-man waited for parcels to be tied up at the grocery. Through the grocery window Tom gazed darkly at the joyous two who, in front of historic Town Hall, were making no secret of their high diversion over the huge "Welcome" that felicitously adorned (because G. A. R. headquarters had a room there) what was now the village jail.

If this Renny was going to be treated as a guest aboard . . .

But Mr. MacLeod's spirit was not the only one depressed by the good times of those who could have them. A pair of very wistful brown eyes

viewed the laughing and chattering pair who came up the steps from the tender.

“For you,” mentioned the gallant Mr. Renny, dropping a package of chocolates in his employer’s lap. Tom, on his way down to the galley with two dozen eggs and a cottage ham, caught the pleased “Why, how dear of you to remember me!”

Of course it would be pretty fresh of a handyman who but yester-morn had said “yes, sir,” to his employer, to be slipping her chocolates to-day . . . but why the dickens hadn’t he thought of it?

“Say, Renny,” he called crisply from the galley, “since you’re steward on this yacht suppose you tote up those potatoes from the tender and stow ’em away. I’ve other things to do.”

His temper was not improved by a conversation that floated down to him while he tinkered over the engine. The hatch at the top of the ladder was closed but through the open ports voices on the bridge just above were perfectly audible.

Mr. Renny, evidently loitering in the galley doorway, was suggesting that a stop be made at Gloucester next day so that he might provide himself with wearables matching those of the handy-

man. The outfit of college duds up at his shack, he pointed out, would not be seemly for one of his lowly station in the yacht's personnel.

His employer did not seem to approve of this excellent idea. "Don't you think, Fran," she said, "it would be sort of pleasant to have one man aboard who could be with us aft? People wouldn't wonder, in a harbor, as of course they would if a deck hand was sitting round with us. Mr. Renny will be busy in the galley at meal-times but why shouldn't he look like a visitor aboard—or one of the family?"

"And I'd have someone to run about with, ashore, now and then." Frances was enthusiastic over the notion.

"I don't approve," began Cousin Phœbe. "If you ask me, as chaperone of the party I think ——"

(Good for Cousin Phœbe, was the approving comment that only the *Gleam's* engine heard.)

The lovely contralto of Miss Puzzled came floating down: "Nobody *has* asked you, Phoebe. You try and look the part of chaperone, that's all that's expected of you, Phœbe dear."

Thus it was that at eventide the handy-man pursuing his humble duties on deck—taking down

colors, putting up the riding light and such—was entertained by the gay voice of Mr. Renny on the bridge. Mr. Renny making himself socially agreeable. Basking in the admiring glances of the ladies. Telling college yarns and being rewarded for his efforts by appreciative laughter—bright, rippling laughter of Frances, hearty giggles of the stout lady, and the low, sweet laugh on two notes that Tom recognized as Emily's. He could not recall having heard her laugh so much in his two days aboard.

Mr. Renny had a guitar, he said, at the shack up Indian River. (He'd been on his college glee and mandolin club, it appeared.) They could have some jolly musical evenings later when they got to more secluded harbors. Mr. Renny also could tell fortunes; the handy-man, taking his professional good-night look at the engine, heard Miss Puzzled being informed that her fate was to be a blue-eyed man with literary tendencies.

“Pickles!” muttered Mr. MacLeod to the magneto. “Renny's Tomato Relish! A fusser.” That was what!

They invited Tom to join them—when kindly dusk offered to make sailorman's ducks on the

bridge less offensively conspicuous—but Mr. MacLeod, pleading important letters to write, retired to the crew's cubby forward. He sneaked up through the hatch later and stretched his legs along the deck, smoking Cliff's pipe and trying to recapture his contented mood of two nights ago. He was on the old *Vagabond*, wasn't he? With the summer ahead of him? What did these people matter? Aliens aboard his *Vagabond* with their foolish prattle and their silly gales of laughter there on the bridge deck. There had been no such disturbing noise on the *Vagabond* in his day. Tom remembered Cliff and Celia murmuring together in the cockpit and old Saunders spinning yarns in his soft voice up here at the bow. Old days that would never be any more.

That girl—he had her sized up now. She was the kind that must have attention. "One man aboard we can have with us aft." So long as there was nobody else she had kept in practice with the handy-man, but of course young Ted Renny, just out of college, was nearer her age. Kids, both. They knew all the slang and the shibboleths of the younger set, grown up since Tom's departure for a man's work in foreign lands. Tom felt very old with his twenty-six

years and all he had been through—soldiering in France and engineering in India.

More noise to destroy the peace of the harbor! Over at the Corinthian Yacht Club the Friday night dance was beginning. Automobiles were roaring up the club drive and a fox-trot bleated over the water. Back there on the bridge deck those youngsters were singing. They would, of course. That piping soprano leading the slushy tenor of Mr. Renny belonged to Frances. The alto—Mr. MacLeod leaned up on an elbow. Some voice carrying that alto! You might know that girl would have a voice like that. She had everything. Even the *Vagabond*. Changed it to *Gleam* to show her the way, she'd said. Well, whatever way it proved to be, it would be *her* way.

There she was now, leaving the party on the bridge and going off by herself; standing at the starboard rail and gazing at the lighted windows of the club house. Wishing she could be over there, dancing, no doubt.

The slim figure in its boyish clothes turned and came forward toward the bow. Tom held his breath. But the figure seemed to hesitate and then moved aft again toward the bridge. Evidently the handy-man was not to be favored this

evening. But Tom was sure he heard a sigh that was half a sob indrawn between parted lips. He must have been mistaken though, for presently he heard the soft contralto laugh following some absurd sally of Mr. Renny's. Maybe that girl was scared at whatever she had run away from, but she wasn't remorseful, at any rate the remorse didn't go very deep.

Mr. Renny, briskly moving about, waked his foc'sle mate at midnight.

"Curious light, that."

Tom grouchily hauled his blanket higher. "What light?"

"Down there to sou'ard. Funny way it keeps flashing: one-four-three—what's it mean?"

"How should I know? You ever going to turn in?"

"But what light is it, Tom? It must be called something—a big light like that ——"

The handy-man thumped his pillow over. In the muffled tone of one not to be advisedly roused from honest slumber he grunted:

"Minot Light, that's all."

CHAPTER XIV

POSITION of skipper on the bridge has strategic value. One could, for instance, send Mr. Renny to the bow to keep lookout for floating driftwood. And if Frances, like so many maidens cruising summer seas, elected what Mr. Renny called the foc'sle head as the jolliest place to perch, so much the better. Her orange sweater made an attractive splash of color against the blue morning sea and much laughter and light persiflage was wafted back on the morning breeze. Mr. MacLeod smiled benevolently. Things seemed to be going agreeably this morning and he could not account for his uncharacteristic fit of gloom last night. It must have been something Mr. Renny cooked for dinner.

Tom, also, was glad to be leaving Marblehead. Something disturbing had happened this morning. On his way back to the tender after a hurried errand ashore for some extra spark plugs he had been halted at the ferry dock by a consequential sort of chap who asked inquisitive questions about the *Gleam*, her owner's name, and her destination. This one wanted to know also how long the handy-

man had been employed on board and whether he knew why the yacht carried no club pennant.

This interrogation Tom decided to keep to himself. He meant to tell Ted Renny about it later in the safe seclusion of the crew's cubby but there was no use, because of anything so indefinite, disturbing the peace of the three women. Anybody tracing resemblance to a missing *Vagabond* in the newly painted *Gleam* would scarcely suggest his suspicions to an employee on the *Gleam*. Cliff MacLeod's *Vagabond* had been a familiar denizen of that harbor and curiosity might be the only motive for the questioning, but any yacht might be sold and its name changed after the death of its owner—nothing criminal in that.

The fact that a yacht of the *Gleam's* tonnage flew no club pennant—sacred shibboleth of clan kinship in yachting harbors—was certainly likely to cause curiosity. It marked that yacht as an alien and an outsider. Tom never looked at the *Gleam* from the water without a sneaking sense of embarrassment that there was no club pennant flying. Almost he was tempted to get out Cliff's New York Yacht Club pennant from the color locker and hoist it forward, but prudence restrained him. The *Gleam* had no possible right

to the pennant and sorry complications might arise if anything disagreeable should turn up about ownership of the yacht.

Well, it was a fine morning and why worry? There was business and bustle in the harbor. The wonderful marconi rig sloops were getting ready for the week-end races; some of them were skimming the harbor like great birds. A big New York forty-footer had come in overnight and the blue ocean outside the harbor entrance was dotted with gay little Cape Cats and funny racing dories that looked, Emily said, exactly like fussy mid-Victorian old ladies picking their way along with tipped up bustles.

“You ought to see the place during race week in August if you think this is lively,” laughed Tom. “No sailing harbor like Marblehead on the coast. They keep their racing sailboats here and live in those mansions ashore—turn up their noses at our Long Island Sound way of sleeping aboard little cabin cruisers and scraping plates out of galley windows. But somehow the harbor here always looks lonesome to me with all the slim masts of the racing boats towering up, and so few solid chunks of comfy motor cruisers with lighted ports at night. It spells money, this harbor, but

it never has the cozy suggestion of Manhasset or Larchmont or New Rochelle."

Brother Emerson, suitably attired, had the wheel again this morning and wore the blithe expression of one leaving dull care behind. The very thrum of the engine had a joyous sound and the curve of foamy wake sweeping jauntily round the harbor buoys suggested a kicking of glad heels at uncongenial shore restrictions.

Tom pointed to the group of buildings huddling on a rock off to starboard. "Children's Island. Sort of fresh air resort for sick kiddies of Boston. Girls from the Neck go over in motor-boats and take 'em toys and play with 'em."

"Fresh air enough," Cousin Phœbe glanced at the sun-baked rock, treeless and set in its rim of leaping, snowy surf, "but a desolate sort of place for children."

Emily's eyes were shining. "But look at the windows—to let the sun in and the big view of sea and clouds and sunsets. And see the nurses—their white dresses on that veranda. Oh, how glorious for the poor little shut-ins! I wish . . . couldn't we stop, Tom, and see the kiddies?"

Then the eagerness went out of her face. "No, I forgot. Of course we can't."

“You like children?” asked Tom, putting a quick hand on the wheel as she looked back wistfully to see the last of the breeze-swept island.

“She’s daft over ’em,” Cousin Phœbe declared. “She ought to have a dozen of her own.”

“I used to plan,” Emily was directing her course carefully as Tom indicated, well to port of Baker’s Island with its two gleaming white lighthouses, “that some day I’d have eight. Four boys and four girls. That’s a good number, don’t you think?” She looked seriously at Tom. “Wouldn’t it have been jolly when they all came home from school at Christmas time?”

“Splendid,—but what made you change your mind?” And, in reply to her puzzled look, “You said you *used* to plan.”

Suddenly and to his complete consternation she flung both arms across her face and ran, sobbing, down the steps to her cabin. Tom caught the wheel as the *Gleam*’s bow twisted dangerously toward a surf-fretted rock and Mr. Renny, springing up with an amazed “Hey!” stared at the bridge.

Cousin Phœbe came close to Tom at the wheel. “You mustn’t mind Emmie, Tom. She’s not herself. She’s been through an awful lot lately.

Emmie's the sunniest girl, quick tempered—yes, but not uneven tempered the way she is now. It's only because she's under a sort of strain. And frightened." Cousin Phœbe glanced at the closed door of the cabin. "She's frightened every minute except when something makes her forget. But this cruise—I don't know. I don't know what's to come of it ——"

"Better just enjoy it." Tom smiled at the plump little lady who truly looked anxious and upset.

"I never did enjoy sitting on a volcano," stated Miss Phœbe cryptically.

Tom tried to draw her attention to Hospital Point lighthouse across the bay and expressed regret that the ladies could not take this opportunity to explore quaint old Salem. But Miss Phœbe was not to be diverted. She was the type of femininity that always has to seek direction of the nearest available member of a presumably stronger and wiser sex and she liked Tom's quietness and lack of flippancy. He did not seem like one of the hard hearted younger generation that nonchalantly dismissed elderly apprehensions.

"There isn't a bigger hearted girl than Emmie anywhere," she persisted. "I want to tell you

something: for years and years that child has been giving a regular weekly amount to a—a relative of hers who hasn't enough to live on. And her own allowance isn't very big either. She has sacrificed clothes and luxuries and things girls love to help out this—this relative. And never telling a soul. That's the kind of girl Emmie is! ”

Tom wondered if Cousin Phœbe might be the relative. She was flushed and her eyes were bright and misty as she looked out over the morning sea. “ And there's Ming,” she added. “ Night after night Emmie has slept in a car out in the garage with that dog because they wouldn't let her have the little fellow in the house and he cried so, in the garage all alone. No one could blame her for ——” The stout lady caught herself up. “ Did she say where we are going after that island, Tom? ”

“ Not to me.” Tom carefully picked his course, eyes on the intricate channel ahead. He was sure his employer would disapprove of these confidences. To his relief, Emily herself appeared, coming along the deck from the cockpit. She had changed from the boy's clothes into a white linen frock and a scarlet flannel sport coat. For the first time Tom saw her hair dressed girlishly and

without the disfiguring cap of Brother Emerson. The rippling chestnut tresses were drawn back from her beautiful forehead and the ends made into great coils over her ears, and the simple arrangement seemed to suit her, lending a sweet dignity to the small head.

Tom gave up the wheel and called her attention to the famous picture post-card effect of Magnolia, far ahead on the high, wooded shore; creamy stucco cottages above ochre and green tones of the bluff and below, the brilliant blue of the ocean. "Sometime you must see it from the shore; the tea rooms and the smart shops with frocks and fans and jewelry displayed in windows under an arcade that shades the street."

The brown eyes viewed distant Magnolia listlessly. What were frocks and fans to one fleeing from tragic trouble, the glance seemed to say. What the girl needed was exercise, Tom knew; change from too much confinement and monotony on the yacht. It was getting on her nerves and giving the edge that Cousin Phœbe had deplored to her temper. Trying to find a way out of some difficulty, with time flying and no solution in sight, might well wear the strongest nerves threadbare.

But it was the lucky Mr. Renny who produced the bright idea and got all the praise. He came tumbling over the bow deck, followed by Frances.

Back of that wooded island they could see this side of Magnolia, he said, was a peach of a little cove, a sandy beach under the shelter of the wooded bluff. He'd explored in his *Skimmer*—had been ashore too, scouted round in the woods. What was the matter with slipping the *Gleam* in back of that island and having a picnic lunch on the sand? Good deep water under the lee of the island and they could row across to the beach in the tender.

“Oh, Emmie, do, do!” begged Frances. “We can put on our bathing suits and take a thermos of hot coffee. Wouldn't you like to go ashore?”

Wouldn't she! The brown eyes shone and such a smile as rewarded the able Mr. Renny. But she turned immediately to her handy-man. “Do you think we might, Tom? It's just as you say.”

The soul of Mr. MacLeod expanded. To him, keeper in chief of her safety, she appealed. Now was his opportunity to discount the efforts of the officious Mr. Renny and sorrowfully veto the foolish venture shoreward. And later perchance

pick out a picnic beach of his own choosing. But instead: "Bully good idea of old Ted's," he conceded generously, and took the wheel to negotiate the passage between beach and island while the girls flew to the cabin for their swimming togs.

Even Cousin Phœbe went along, deposited in the tender by the combined efforts of steward and handy-man. Mr. Renny, having no bathing garb, concentrated on the picnic, making trips to the yacht and spreading a noble repast of cold chicken, deviled eggs, olives, jam and sandwiches, with piping hot coffee from the thermos bottles. And while Frances paddled in the shallows, shrieking at the cold of the water, Tom and Emily swam and floated and raced each other until they came, glowing and stinging all over as with prick of fiery needles, to huddle into warm jackets and sun themselves on the sand.

Here was Miss Puzzled, Tom surmised, at her natural best; worrisome problems forgotten in gay enjoyment of the moment, eyes bright from her battle with the icy water and the merry contralto laugh parting her red lips. Lovely—in her clinging little swimming suit of blue jersey with the scarlet sport coat over her shoulders and pretty

bare knees cuddling into the sand as she sat, feet curled under her.

Tom leaned forward and drew up the scarlet coat that was slipping.

“In sooth red flannel is a saucy test
Which few can put on with impunity,”

quoted he.

“Who said that,—Shakespeare?”

“No,—Emerson.”

“I don’t believe you.”

“Some day I’ll show you——” He caught himself up. In this pleasant atmosphere he must not assume too much.

But she was smiling, unoffended at her handyman’s presumption. “When did you learn such a lot? Busy, happy young chaps don’t usually commune with Emerson, do they?”

He was scooping out a well in the sand. “What made you think I was happy?”

She looked at him under her lashes.

“Aren’t you happy—this morning—Tom? I am.”

Tom rolled over full length in the sand and dug diligently at his well. The golden particles ran through his slim brown fingers. Suddenly she bent over him and whispered:

“I know you are not happy, Tom. That’s what drew me to you—made me trust you.”

He glanced up at her. “Unhappiness doesn’t necessarily make a man trustworthy, Miss Jame-son. Don’t ever take chances like that. But I’m glad you trust me”—he returned to his digging—“and I’m not unhappy now ——”

“Now ——?”

“Not while I can serve *you*.”

She slipped her fingers into the sand and began to dig also, letting a cascade of golden dust fall back into the hole he was making.

“Tom,” she asked gravely, “are you married?”

He sat up straight. “Do you think I would be here if I were?”

“But if you were unhappy? People do run away from that sort of unhappiness ——”

“It hasn’t been that sort of unhappiness. And if it were, I shouldn’t run away, I guess.” (Not this particular way anyhow, thought Mr. Mac-Leod to himself.) But a little thrill ran through him. A girl wouldn’t ask a man a thing like that unless she had begun to feel—well, interested in him. . . .

A few moments of silence while he dug at his well and she at hers. Ming came sniffing and

trotted off again. Little waves splashed up the beach. "Where my caravan has rested," Mr. Renny was caroling to the sun-dappled glades of the woodland. He had taken Frances on an exploring expedition and Cousin Phœbe was gathering wild flowers further down the beach.

"Tom," Emily stopped digging and clasped her hands around her updrawn knees. "Don't you think it's ever excusable to run away from—anything?"

"That would depend," he answered carefully. In her voice had been a note of pleading. She was looking far out beyond the curve of the island to the blue reaches of ocean. "Sometimes running away from things, you know, puts us in a worse position than sticking it out and facing 'em."

"But if it would hurt—oh, more than you could bear—to face them?"

"Hurt me?" he said, "or just hurt my pride? Or my comfort? I'd have to think of that, you know. In an offshore gale a ship that drags her anchor isn't always safe . . . she's likely to run up against something a good deal worse than the gale."

"But if it was just a little ship, not strong

enough to stand the gale." She turned her glance to him, smiling wistfully.

He smiled back at her. "Even a little skiff can ride out a big gale if its anchor is fast. A ship's strength, you know, doesn't depend so much on the ship—as on her anchor. Mostly we *do* have strength, if we have the right kind of anchor, sunk in the right place."

"I suppose you mean by that some strength bigger than ourselves ——"

"No," he replied quickly, "not bigger than *ourselves* . . . but stronger than our impulse to dodge or drift."

She sat looking out to sea, a frown between her brows, her dark eyes full of trouble. Poor little ship whose anchor had dragged and who was running away from the gale.

"There's one thing I have run away from," he admitted. "I'm running away from it now."

She turned and looked at him. Young Tom's eyes just then, as he rested on his elbows and gazed in his turn out at the far horizon, had that look that not everybody saw. Emily saw it. "I know what it is, Tom."

He stared at her. "You do?"

“ I see it back of your eyes. Isn't it—loneliness? ”

“ But I don't see how you knew? ”

“ I don't know either. I just knew. ” Through the sand her hand slid, palm up, and shoved itself under his. “ You're not going to be lonely any more, now—on the *Gleam*. ”

For one instant his fingers closed and locked with hers. Then he sprang up. It was high time somebody cleared up the dishes, he insisted, since Mr. Renny was patently neglectful of his job. And for a few moments there was cheerful clatter of crockery being piled in a basket.

Presently, “ It wasn't a girl, was it? ”

“ What wasn't a girl? ” Tom looked up from his business of corking a thermos bottle.

“ That made you feel the lonesomeness. No, don't answer! ” She bundled the table-cloth into the basket, her cheeks very red. “ I hadn't any right to ask that. ”

Mr. MacLeod knelt on the opposite side of the basket and fitted the thermos bottle in accurately. Girls, he stated, had meant very little in his life until ——

“ Until —— ” she prompted.

“ No, I'd better not say it. ”

Across the basket her eyes challenged him, mischievously yet with a gentleness back of the mischief that drew him on. "Yes, say it, Tom," she whispered.

He came out with it recklessly: "Until that night in the Pullman."

He half expected then that she would draw back in one of her swift changes of mood and favor him with a haughty stare. Why couldn't he have left well enough alone? Because she had been gracious this morning, extra kind in her little interlude of happy picnicking on sunny sands was no reason for her hired handy-man's presuming to suggest an acknowledged friendliness from the beginning. The red lips parted; it was coming now ——

But what she meant to say he never knew. Mr. Renny, not so much leaping as very briskly sauntering, bore down upon them.

"Beat it," slid succinctly from the corner of the Renny mouth nearest them. "Beat it quick!"

CHAPTER XV

FROM a knoll, higher up the wooded slope, two persons were interestedly watching the beach picnic. They appeared to be village folk, the caretaker of an estate perhaps, and a middle-aged chambermaid on her afternoon out. But the woman had a pair of opera glasses at her eyes and both watchers had the air of having been there some time.

Sanctuary of the yacht having been attained with careful effect of unhurried departure from a finished and done with picnic, Tom was about to dispatch Mr. Renny for the red sport coat and Cousin Phœbe's eye-glasses which seemed to have been left behind on the beach, when he changed his mind, slipped into the crew's cubby and donned his duck jumper and breeches and took the tender ashore himself.

The two observers had come down to the beach and were engaged in absorbed examination of the red sport coat. "This what you're lookin' for?" The woman held the red coat toward Tom.

The handy-man thanked her pleasantly. "There was a pair of eye-glasses, too ——"

“Here you are.” The man proffered them and Tom, touching his saucer cap, moved toward the tender.

“Wait a bit,” invited the masculine person; “kind of a hurry, ain’t you?”

“Can’t keep my people waiting ——”

“That boat is called the *Gleam*, I see. What’s their name on board?”

“Jameson.”

“That fellah in gray short pants the owner?”

Since Brother Emerson, this day, was so much out of costume and character of masculine invalidism it might be as well to let Mr. Renny carry responsibilities. The handy-man admitted that Mr. Jameson usually wore knickers when cruising.

“*Mister Jameson*, you say.” The man looked at the woman and she raised her eyebrows. “That brown-eyed girl now,” she mentioned, “the one in the blue bathing suit—what there was of it—that Mrs. Jameson?”

As though waking to the impertinence of this catechism the handy-man swung on his heel, got into the tender and took up his oars.

“Wait a bit, wait a bit,” urged the man following along down the beach. “We ain’t merely curious, we got a reason for asking ——”

Here the woman reached out and nudged his elbow. "Just tell us this," she demanded of Tom; "is that fat one with the broken arm named Hageboom, or ain't she?"

Tom, rowing away, pretended not to hear. He very well remembered that Hageboom had been the name on Miss Puzzled's suitcase. Something was up. Maybe a newspaper advertisement trying to trace the runaways. The moment the *Gleam* reached a harbor of any consequence he must get the New York and Boston papers.

Before taking the coat to Emily he examined it carefully. The label inside bore the name of a smart Fifth Avenue shop. In one pocket was a silk sport handkerchief unmarked with any initial, and in the other pocket a vanity kit and half a puppy biscuit.

He decided to say nothing to Emily. She had been so happy to-day, he hated to bring that look of strain back to the brown eyes. But he wished it were bedtime so he could confer with Ted Renny who for all his inconsequent frivolling had a head on his shoulders. Tom wondered if there could be any connection between these country folk and the fellow at Marblehead who had been concerned with the identity of the yacht.

But it was to be some time before Mr. MacLeod discovered how important a part in his affairs as well as the affairs of those with whom destiny had entangled his interests that innocent picnic on the sands had played.

They were running past the Reef of Norman's Woe and Mr. Renny, of course, was reciting dramatically "The Wreck of the Hesperus," immortal stanzas quoted probably every fair day of every summer while excursion craft careen gaily over the hidden ledge.

Fog-bells on that rock-bound coast were not lacking now,—Tom pointed to the great bell-buoy that at the end of the dreadful reef sends out its ceaseless warning. And outside the bell-buoy the wide and safe and wonderful channel into old Gloucester harbor.

"Those were the happy days for poets," sighed Mr. Renny. "They could get away with anything.

"Then up and spoke an old sail-or
Had sailed the Spanish Main,
'I prithee put in yonder port,
For I fear the hurri-cane.'

Imagine trying to put that across now with the editor of the *Atlantic* or the *Dial*! You wouldn't

even get your postage stamp back, he'd chuck the whole thing in his waste-basket so quick."

Whereupon the playwright was hauled into a spirited controversy with two indignant young women who dared him to belittle their sacred traditions in poesy with his cheap modern standards of free verse, and the discussion took all three down to the aft cabin where bookshelves offered opportunity for reference.

Tom turned to Cousin Phœbe who sat near the wheel in the shelter of the windshield.

"Miss Phœbe, does the name Hageboom mean anything to you?"

"Oh, my gracious!" squeaked the stout lady, and jumped in her chair as though a mouse had suddenly nipped her ankle. Tom glanced warningly at the door of the cabin.

"I don't want to alarm Miss Jameson ——"

She leaned forward and regarded him with frightened eyes. "What makes you ask? Has anything happened?"

"Those people on the beach wanted to know if the lady with her arm in a sling was named Hageboom—now, please, Miss Phœbe, I shouldn't have told you about it except that I thought you could keep calm and perhaps help me ——"

“Emmie.” Her eyes were terrified. “Emmie mustn’t know. She’s just beginning to quiet down and get some sleep. That child has hardly had a wink of sleep for two weeks ——”

“That’s it, we mustn’t upset her unless it is absolutely necessary. But I didn’t know how important this Hageboom business might be.”

“You’re a good boy, Tom.” Miss Phœbe looked at him kindly. “I wish Emmie would tell you the whole story. But she won’t,—and she has her reasons. I’ll tell you this much, however: Hageboom is my name. Emmie’s mother and mine were first cousins. Now how on earth did those people know ——”

Suddenly she clapped a plump hand over her mouth. “Those eye-glasses!”

“The ones I brought back to you?”

“Of course. I told you it was funny you got the glasses and not the case. I never lay my glasses down without shutting them in the case.”

“You think those people kept the case?”

“Of course they did—and my name and address were on a strip of paper inside the case.”

“Oh, Miss Phœbe!” Tom felt as upset as though this piece of carelessness threatened disaster to plans of his own.

“I know,” she mourned. “I ought to have scratched out the name. But how should I ever dream I’d be taking my glasses ashore? Oh, Tom, don’t tell Emmie! If I’ve given anybody any clue so we can be followed I might just as well get off this boat now for I shouldn’t dare face her ——”

“I shall not tell her,” assured Tom soothingly. “Buck up, Miss Phœbe, she must not come back and find you like this. Listen: it may not amount to anything after all. Country people are always curious. They read the name inside the case and of course assumed the glasses belonged to you and not to either of the girls. That name didn’t mean a thing to them—they were just trying to be smart. Cheer up now, here come Renny and Miss Jameson.”

As the two came running up the steps from the cabin Tom drew attention to the curious effect produced by some fishing boats outside the breakwater. The sails in gray silhouette seemed to be pasted against the sky just over the breakwater. “Those boats are actually ten miles out at sea. It’s an odd effect I’ve noticed before, coming into Gloucester from sou’ward in an afternoon light.”

Miss Phœbe had edged up close to the wheel. "Why do you suppose," she whispered, "they kept the case?"

Tom had wondered about this too but had hoped it wouldn't occur to Miss Phœbe.

They had passed the twin lights of Thatcher, and Straitsmouth Light guarding the dangerous ledges just above, and Tom said the next big light on the waterway to Maine would be on Isles of Shoals, twenty miles straight northward. Ten miles above that, Boon Island Light. Then an hour's run to Cape Porpoise and another hour to Cape Elizabeth and after that the stretch to Portland.

"It sounds a long way," Emily said. "We'll never make it by sundown ——"

"Not if we go after Ted's typewriter and things up Indian River. I thought that was the plan for to-day."

Mr. Renny looked unhappy. "I thought you realized of course that stopping for my duds would take an extra day. It's a deserted sort of place, at the end of nowhere. Couldn't we put in the night there and make an early start for Maine in the morning?"

"What do you think?" she glanced at Tom.

“I don’t know how much water there is up there,” hesitated the *Gleam’s* skipper. “The tide is running out now and it wouldn’t do to be caught in there at dead low if a squall came up. I don’t like the look of it over nor’west.” He glanced at some harmless looking rose-tinted clouds above the shore line of Newburyport. “If you say so, Miss Jameson, we can chance it. There may be good anchorage and as Ted says, it would be a quiet place for the night. Otherwise we could go straight ahead to Portland and Ted could come back by train, pick up his duds and join us later ——”

The woebegone face of Mr. Renny at this proposal to separate him from the *Gleam* made even Emily laugh. “Oh, go ahead and get his playthings, Tom,” she decided. “The child’ll be ill if we deny him that precious typewriter another twenty-four hours.”

“You little know, sweet lady, how precious some of that stuff is,” asserted Mr. Renny solemnly; but instantly he became jubilant as the *Gleam’s* prow was pointed westward. Tom knew he was specially anxious to recover the extra pair of spectacles at his shack. His near-sighted eyes

had suffered, these two days, without the glasses smashed by his tussle with the surf.

But all the way up the river Emily sat, elbows on the rail and chin propped on clasped hands, gloomily contemplating the water and the uninteresting bungalows along shore. She refused to be amused even by the seals disporting on a sandbar at the river mouth, sleek, pretty timid things that slid into the water as the yacht approached and popped up again the moment it had passed. Tom wondered if she was sulky. She had yielded graciously enough about the overnight delay but perhaps she felt antagonistic toward Mr. Renny for balking her plans—that intense longing she seemed to have to get to the remote island she had set her mind on.

How quickly, the moment any diversion or excitement was over, her little face fell into its look of hopeless depression. No, it wasn't sulkiness but sadness in her eyes as she crouched by the rail. The poor little thing was unhappy, miserable most of the time and trying to keep up and be merry in order not to spoil the fun of the others.

He had been happy too, this morning. Now his spirits were away down again. Watching that girl every minute, worrying when she was despondent,

feeling buoyant when she was blithe—it was keeping him all upset; taking all the joy out of his cruise on the old *Vagabond*. He'd quit it. He had a definite purpose in being on this boat. . . .

And then suddenly he thought of the splendid opportunity he had missed that morning. Instead of loafing on the sand he might have been exploring behind the panel! All of them ashore,—he could easily have made an excuse to go out to the yacht and, the tender along with him, would have been perfectly safe from interruption. A heaven-sent opportunity, and he had neglected it for the foolish business of lolling on a beach and looking into a pair of brown eyes. Such a chance might never come again. Thunderation! What had gotten into him?

No more nonsense from now on!

Mr. Renny's shack proved to be a dugout in the side of a hill. A low door opening into the grassy hillside disclosed a good sized room lined with planks and furnished with bunks, chairs and table. There were even lamps and a strip of carpet.

A sort of hunting lodge, Mr. Renny explained, owned by some clubmen of Boston who came up here for duck shooting in the autumn. Decoys were fed for days and then set free, and returning

brought their wild brethren with them. "You just put down your cigar and stand inside the door here and pot 'em. Great, isn't it?" enthused Mr. Renny.

"I call it murder," retorted Frances. "Just like a pack of men to consider that sport. Pray tell me where *you* got the key?"

That, mentioned Mr. Renny, was another story. He started suddenly. "Holy smoke, the door was unlocked! Someone's been here."

Groping in a corner he made hurried investigation. "By George, someone *has* been here. Mind the paint, Tom, it's been knocked over."

The contents of a can of green paint was oozing over the floor. It did not improve Mr. MacLeod's temper to find he had set his white buckskin deck shoe in it. "Hurry up with your traps," he growled, "there's about two feet of water over that bar at low tide, and a squall coming. The quicker we get out of here, the better. Great Scott, Ted, not all those boxes!"

"They've been opened," wailed Mr. Renny who was squatting on the floor making hasty inspection. "This one has—with my typewriter. And this one—with my books. Golly, that's lucky."

“We can’t stow those boxes on board,” objected Tom. “Dump out your things and we’ll pile the lot in the tender ——”

“Not on your life,” declared the playwright; “these boxes go along just as they are. I’ll find a place for ’em.”

“But why boxes instead of a trunk? And why the green paint? What’s the idea?”

“Because I couldn’t handle a trunk on the *Skimmer* and I had to move my college duds some way. The green paint was up here,—my frat color you know ——”

At that instant from the *Gleam* came a distracted cry:

“Tom! Help!”

Six leaps down the hill and six pulls on the oars sent Tom flying to the yacht. He found Emily and Cousin Phœbe locked in the cabin. Two men in a launch, Emily reported, had come snooping alongside. “I was on the bridge watching you people but Cousin Phœbe says they were here astern looking at the *Gleam’s* name. And they stood up and tried to peek in the cabin.”

“I was changing my stockings,” stated the stout lady indignantly.

“And then I heard them around at the port

side and one of them was climbing up, trying to get aboard. Of course I screamed for you, Tom, and he dropped back in the boat and they went away, up that bend in the river."

The thing was getting on Tom's nerves. If anybody was tracking the yacht for one reason or another and was going to pounce on them, Tom wished to goodness he'd pounce and be done with it. This espionage was distinctly irritating. As far as he could make out the idea seemed to be, not to interfere with them but to keep tabs on their movements. And whoever was doing the sleuthing wasn't quite certain whether the persons on the *Gleam* were the ones sought.

Coming out into Ipswich Bay Tom saw that he would never be able to make Gloucester before the squall struck. Wind was already sweeping the water into whitecaps and a pall of blackness hung overhead. He decided to run straight across the bay to Annisquam and getting out his oilskins, called to Mr. Renny to close ports and hatches. The three women had remained hidden inside the cabin during the down-river trip. Tom began to feel as Emily did, that the sooner the *Gleam* started for that sea-begirt isle the better. It would take a big boat to trail the yacht to

Monhegan and these pesky little launches, once given the slip, would be kept pretty busy searching all the Maine harbors where a yacht might put in.

“Oh, Tom, let me take the wheel.”

Emily had come up on the bridge. She was covered from neck to knee with an oilskin slicker and wore a sou'wester dragged down over her hair. The wind was screaming past now and lightning darted out of the blackness across the west. The bay, so sunny and smooth an hour ago, was piling up in great green rollers down which the *Gleam* slid, to come up quivering, spray flying high at her bow.

“Let me take the wheel,” she coaxed.

He shook his head as she crowded up beside him in the shelter of the windshield. Her face, framed by the yellow sou'wester, was vivid and excited, her dark eyes bright.

“Not a bit afraid, are you?” He smiled at her.

“I love a big wind. It's glorious.

“We are not in any real danger, are we?” she added as a heavy sea sent the yacht careering to port and almost threw them off their feet. Tom steadied her with an outflung arm. “Danger?”

Not a bit of it. The old *Vagabond* laughs at a little breeze like this."

"Don't forget her name is the *Gleam* now," reminded Emily quickly. "It makes me feel a whole lot safer to know you have cruised on her before. Where are we going?"

He pointed through the blurred windshield. The rain had come now and thunder was cracking overhead. "You see that red speck ahead? Squam Light. Bad sandbar this side of it, but beyond the bar a good deep channel into the harbor."

"But suppose you didn't know about the sandbar and steered straight toward the light?"

He laughed, eyes on that red speck ahead. "Then we *would* be out of luck. Many a boat has piled up on that bar, I reckon, because its skipper hadn't looked at his charts. A good sailor sails *by* the lights, you know—not *at* 'em."

She was keeping her balance on the unsteady deck by clinging to his coat-sleeve. It hampered him in his control of the wheel but not for worlds would he have told her so. There was something oddly pleasant, in that turmoil of storm and darkness, to feel the nearness of the little figure so warm and instinct with life. The small hand

tugging at his arm was tangible expression of her dependence upon him; reminder of his responsibility for her safety and of her trust in it.

He knew now why in big storms Cliff had always wanted Celia beside him at the wheel. Tom could see them standing in this very place, Cliff frowning through the streaming windshield and Celia in her oilskins at his elbow. It gave a man a strong and efficient and tender feeling somehow; the raging elements all about, his boat under his feet and the woman he guarded beside him unafraid because she knew he would take care of her.

He swung the *Gleam* safely into the channel between Squam Light and the leaping line of breakers that marked the sand spit.

“All safe now. In a minute, when we round the point, you’ll see the anchor lights. I always love them best of all.”

And even as he spoke the yacht club windows glowed, warm orange squares, through the rain, and lanterns glimmered on the boats at their moorings. Mr. Renny, sweater collar turned up around his ears, came scampering forward as the throb of the engine ceased. He had been reassuring Cousin Phœbe, he explained, as he dashed for the bow deck.

“I know why you love the anchor lights, Tom,” Emily whispered. “The big wind was wonderful,—exciting and thrilling—but those anchor lights are better. They mean security, don’t they? Safe harbor after the storm; peace ——”

“And home,” answered homeless young Tom MacLeod.

CHAPTER XVI

BROTHER EMERSON possessed one accomplishment which likelier youths might have envied.

To Tom, tinkering in the engine room, came sound of the cheery whistling overhead and his own lips pursed to carry the tune. A quaint, gay little tune that Mr. Renny had been singing the night before to the accompaniment of his glee club guitar.

I passed by your window when the morning was
red,
The dew on the rosebud, the lark overhead.
And oh! I sang softly, though no one could hear,
To bid you good-morning, good-morning, my dear.

They had been four days at Annisquam, happy, unworried days with nothing more disturbing to their peace than the sputter of Fourth of July firecrackers on shore and the persevering click of Mr. Renny's typewriter on the bridge. A rough sea and a gale out of the north had followed the squall, not pleasant conditions for a long pull to Maine, so they had delayed over the Sunday and the little harbor seeming so remote and so safe (and as Mr. Renny cleverly suggested, so easy to

dodge out of two ways: up the bay to Ipswich or through the canal to Gloucester), they had lingered on.

Tom had hunted up a washerwoman ashore and toted suitcases of laundry back and forth, and Mr. Renny and he had dashed over to Gloucester to execute shopping commissions for the ladies. Cousin Phœbe demanded hairnets, Frances, chocolates and Emily, newspapers. Tom searched carefully through the papers, coming back in the bus, but discovered no inquiries for wanted Hagebooms or missing yachts.

He saw Emily later with the newspapers strewn about her on the bridge, her eyes, assisted by a moving forefinger, hunting down the printed columns. Evidently, like Tom, she found nothing alarming, and at luncheon seemed to have cast off part of her burden of anxiety or fear and was in one of her rare moods of gaiety, joining in the nonsense that Frances and the *Gleam's* steward were wont to bandy at meal-times.

Tom and Mr. Renny continued to take their repasts in the galley for though Cousin Phœbe declared it was all foolishness not to sit down together at table the handy-man insisted on stern adherence to yachting conventions while they

were in harbor. But Mr. Renny, dashing up and down the steps between galley and bridge, never failed to make a general lark of meal hour. Between meals he accompanied Frances ashore for rambles over the winding roads of old "Squam" and they brought home armfuls of the wonderful wild roses of Cape Ann. At dusk, Tom rowed Emily (carefully appareled as Brother Emerson) through the quiet back channels and around Lobster Cove where picturesque stone docks and ancient, weather-beaten houses cast reflections in the still water.

Last evening they had ventured around the point and across the bar to drift in the sunset glow. Annisquam, Tom told her, was famous for its sunsets and he regretted that she could not see the effect at low tide when sea and rocks and far stretching sands turned an unforgettable violet under the twilight sky. This night, with the tide rippling over the bar, the bay had been jade and hyacinth and primrose—like an exquisite Kirmanshah carpet Emily declared. When colors of sea and sky faded, Squam Light across the channel gleamed like a great ruby against the dusk.

Perhaps they could stop on the way back and get the low tide effect, hoped Tom.

“Our way back!” she repeated, gaze coming abruptly from far distances to his face.

“From Monhegan,” he reminded her.

Her startled expression was followed by a little troubled frown. “I’ve never thought of coming back,” she whispered. “I can’t think beyond that island, Tom.” She looked away from him at the jewel-bright reflection of Squam Light in the still sea. “And if you don’t want to torture me don’t speak of it again.”

This morning, however, she was whistling on the bridge. When Tom came up through the hatch a little later she had vanished, but he found Frances smearing white cleaning-paste on a pair of deck shoes.

“Oh, Tom—that you? Here’s something Em-mie asked me to give you.”

Out of the breast pocket of her middy Frances drew an oblong of paper—greenish paper. Tom drew back sharply.

Wages!

“Em says you and Mr. Renny can divide it as you think best. She doesn’t know what the amount ought to be for two helpers aboard but she hopes this will be all right ——”

“Where is Miss Jameson?” Tom, regarding the outstretched greenish oblong with strong distaste, kept his hands in his pockets.

“Why, in the cabin I think, Tom. Emmie just didn’t like to hand this to you so I said I would. Oh, very well,” Frances laid the unpleasant oblong on the chart table and picked up her shoe-sponge, “go and see her yourself. I haven’t anything to do with it. But if you take my advice,” she lowered her voice and gave him a straight look, “you’ll accept those wages.”

Thumb and forefinger holding the folded oblong as one carries some poisonous thing Mr. MacLeod proceeded down the deck to the cockpit and presented himself at the cabin door. His employer looked up from the desk where she seemed to be extremely busy checking up items on a grocery list.

Upon item “7 pounds flour, 5 pounds sugar, 2 cans sardines” Tom deposited the folded greenbacks. She looked up at him.

“I can’t take that, Miss Jameson.”

His face was red and uncomfortable and instantly her cheeks flushed also. “Of course you’ll take it, Tom. It was our agreement, wasn’t it?”

“But I can’t, Miss Jameson, and Renny won’t either. We’ve talked it over. You are giving us

two a corking vacation on a dandy boat and the little we do aboard is no more than any fellows would do, cruising, just for the pleasure of being along. You folks have been mighty good, taking us in as friends, not employees, and accepting money would—would spoil the whole thing. Oh, Great Scott," finished Tom, acutely miserable over this intrusion of filthy lucre in a friendly relationship, "you know what I mean!"

"You mean"—she was tracing triangles and circles on the grocery list—"it would spoil friendship between you and me?"

"That's just what I do mean." Tom's voice was eager. "You have been wonderful to me, giving me friendship and—and trust. It's meant a lot to me at a—a lonely time. Let's leave money out of it." He came closer to the writing desk. "I want to help you any way I can. Won't you let me do it just as a friend? . . . And Renny too of course," he appended hastily.

She looked up and smiled at him. "But I thought you were broke, Tom. That's what you told me when you applied for the job. However Mr. Renny feels I couldn't let *you* waste several weeks of your summer just—taking care of me."

Tom grinned. He was not so broke, he assured her, that he couldn't afford a little vacation on the *Gleam*. Then, at her doubtful look, he dug into his trouser pocket and brought up a handsome roll of greenish paper of his own. "Several hundred between me and starvation," he told her.

"Tom!" She reproached him, laughter in her eyes. "I don't believe you actually needed this job at all."

The gray eyes laughed back into the brown ones. "But I *wanted* it."

"How much money have you?" she asked severely.

"Not much. But as I told you, a good honest job waiting for me in September."

"What sort of a job?" she inquired quickly.

"Oh—work in my line." If she wasn't giving anything away neither was he, that's what his laughing glance said to hers. As usual any reminder of her own problem, any getting beyond pleasant forgetfulness of the moment sent the smile from her lips and brought that shadow to her eyes. She pushed aside the papers on her desk and stood up.

"All right, Tom. You and Mr. Renny are dears and I appreciate it. I think myself it will

be a lot hap—more agreeable to be just friends together ——”

She turned to Frances who was coming through the forward cabin carrying the white deck shoes. “They won’t take it, Fran. What shall we do, fire ’em?”

Frances put down the shoes and looked meaningfully at Emily. “That might be wiser. You know what I think, Em.”

“It’s all settled, Miss Frances,” put in Tom quickly. He was feeling so much happier with the hateful money question consigned to limbo that he dreaded to have the argument reopened.

Frances shook her bobbed head. “It’s better to have a business arrangement—for us, Tom, as much as for you. You see if anything should happen (You know what I mean, Emily!) it would be a good deal better all round if Tom and Ted Renny are paid employees on this yacht ——”

She looked hard at Emily. “You know very well, Em, what you may be letting those boys in for, otherwise.”

“I never thought of that,” Emily whispered.

“Especially Tom,” murmured Frances. Emily flushed.

Tom looked from one to the other. Whatever

the dire consequences he wasn't going to sacrifice his new-found standing in the ship's company. He reached over and extracted from the oblong on the desk two crisp one dollar bills. "One for me and one for Renny," he grinned. "Full reimbursement in advance for services rendered in capacities of handy-man and steward for the period of this cruise. Now, Miss Frances, forget your worries, whatever they are. We're paid. Consider the subject closed."

He saluted in smart handy-man style and departed through the door to the cockpit.

But as he was crossing the bridge to the engine room hatch he heard Emily's voice behind him. She had run through the cabin to the forward door. She was laughing.

"Tom, would you mind going to Gloucester today and spending some of those wages of yours for a few clothes? I'd love to take a walk to that Squam Rock to-night but I don't feel I can do it with a sailor in a duck jumper."

Thus it was that Mr. MacLeod sauntered down to the *Gleam's* tender that evening resplendent in creased white flannels, his smoothly brushed hair guiltless of the defacing saucer cap and inviting cool breezes, as befitted the pate of a nice young

fellow escorting a summer girl on a stroll. And to his joy, it was not Brother Emerson who came forth from the cabin, but dainty Miss Puzzled in her red sport coat and with an adorable cheeky little sport hat drawn down over the bronze-brown hair.

It was a night of nights for Squam Rock. The wind, rising at sunset, had strengthened to a sturdy gale out of the northwest and they breasted it all the way up the hill. When they came out on the high bluff facing the sea it tugged at Emily's skirt and ruffled Tom's hair. A glorious gale that whipped the air clean of fog and heat haze and made the stars incredibly bright overhead. The lights on Salisbury Beach, across on the Ipswich shore, sparkled like diamonds and far, far as eye could see northward, only to be caught if one peered breathlessly, a recurring momentary luminance against the blackness,—the Isles of Shoals flash.

Scarcely once in a summer, Tom told Emily, and only on such a night as this, windy and crystal clear, was the great flash of Isles of Shoals visible from Squam.

“You are always showing me a light, Tom.”

She spoke so softly that he had to stoop to catch her words above the scream of the gale.

“It’s the thing most worth finding and seeing, isn’t it?” he answered. “In the night and over the sea. I’ve the sailor’s instinct, I reckon.”

“Light!” she whispered. “It’s the thing most worth finding always, anywhere. It’s what I’m looking for,—light. It’s what I’ve lost.” She drew close to him and slipped her arm through his, her cheek all but touching his coat-sleeve. “Oh, Tom, help me to find it,—light!”

But before he could answer she drew away from him and made some reference to the discomfort of the wind in this exposed spot. “Let’s run before it,” she challenged. “I’ll beat you to the edge of the hill.” And not again that evening did her talk approach the serious.

Coming down the hill they had the gale behind them and Tom’s arm was slipped beneath hers, first to steady her on the steep incline and then for no particular reason except that he kept it there and she let it remain. The air was cool and bracing, like September, and they walked fast. The moon had come up and made sharp shadows of tossing branches on the roadway. The bracing

air and their brisk motion sent the young blood bounding through their veins.

Here again was the real Emily, Tom thought happily, the incarnation of light-hearted girlhood, full of chatter about inconsequent things and laughing when she tripped on a loose stone and he caught her up. The arm under hers was indispensable of course both admitted though neither mentioned it aloud.

Whether it was his decent flannels that made him feel his own man again, or because the abominable wage-basis had been discontinued, he rejoiced to-night in a new footing of friendliness between them, a sort of taken-for-granted comradeship.

They rowed out to the *Gleam* over wind-tossed water, Emily breaking into little shrieks of mock terror when choppy waves splashed her coat. As they came up from the tender they could hear Mr. Renny singing to his glee club guitar.

“And oh! I sang softly, though no one was near,
Good-night and God bless you, God bless you, my
dear,”

sang Mr. Renny on the bridge. He was singing to Frances but down by the steps Tom's hand held

Emily's for a long minute. Then she slipped aft and vanished in the cabin.

Whatever the dire consequences (as Frances had darkly hinted to-day) if the Jameson Nemesis overtook Mr. MacLeod in the capacity of familiar friend rather than humble wage earner aboard the *Gleam*, Mr. MacLeod, undressing in the crew's cubby by light of the moon, decided they were not worth speculating about.

CHAPTER XVII

TOM found himself thinking, next morning, of what Emily had said about light. He had no idea that she meant light in the religious sense; it was light on her problem she craved, some gleam to point the way as she had said when she changed the yacht's name.

Tom was not what he would have called religious. If you had pressed him to define his creed he would probably have told you, rather shyly, that it was: to keep decent, to do the square thing, and to lend a hand. And in one's work to labor for the idea back of the work rather than for possible perquisites derived from the labor. Light, as she meant it, he imagined meant good judgment, wisdom to choose the best way out of a difficulty.

Choosing implied two ways to be taken, and choice, in a girl like Emily, suggested, as Ted Renny had instantly said, a man somewhere. It might be a question of marrying somebody she disliked for benefit to someone near and dear—a personal sacrifice she found it hard to make. Or

it might be that she loved a man to whom another woman had more right and now, having taken herself out of the way, was unhappy and trying to decide whether the sacrifice was worth while. Tom much preferred the former solution. Whatever her worry, she was dreading pursuit and knew she had but a short time to come to a decision.

Rowing back from shore with the breakfast cream he was recalling Squam Rock in the wind and darkness and her hand tucked through his arm as they gazed across the sea to the distant flash on Isles of Shoals. Last night's gale had blown itself out, leaving a clean freshness in the air and the water was blue, reflecting a cloudless sky. A fine day for a walk—up through those woods on the other side of Lobster Cove maybe—if she would go.

Sound of cheery voices on the bridge floated down as he tied his tender at the steps.

“And oh! I sang softly, though no one could hear,
To bid you good-morning, good-morning, my dear,”
caroled Mr. Renny, depositing a plate of smoking waffles in front of Cousin Phœbe.

Emily leaned over the rail. “Where's Ming, Tom?”

“Great Scott!” gasped the handy-man. Lost in dreamy reflections of Squam Rock and starlight he had rowed away from shore unmindful of Growlo’s absence from the tender. He leaped down the steps and began to unloose the painter.

A clear and charming voice came across the water. “Here is your dog. I’m bringing him.”

Approaching the *Gleam* was a small launch. A yacht’s boy had the wheel and in the stern a girl in a white frock sat cuddling the Peke. The girl smiled up into Emily’s anxious face as the launch drew in at the *Gleam*’s landing steps.

“The darling was whimpering and running back and forth along the edge of the dock. I thought he was going to jump and try to swim out to you. I saw your man had forgotten him so I brought him along.” She nodded toward a handsome yacht that had come into the harbor the night before. “I’m on the *Loafalong*.”

Emily ran down to the deck and stood at the top of the landing steps, arms outstretched for Ming who was growling atrociously and trying to scramble out of his new friend’s embrace. The two girls chatted a moment and then the stranger lifted the dog toward the *Gleam*’s handy-man who was supposed to be, during this conversational ex-

change between his betters, standing respectfully at attention.

Contrary to all requirements and canons of yacht etiquette, however, this handy-man had presented his back to his betters and was seemingly lost in contemplation of the *Gleam's* coat of paint.

“Tom!” Emily’s voice was a bit sharp. “Turn around and take Ming from the young lady.”

And then for the first time the young lady looked into the face of the *Gleam's* handy-man. It was a good long look. Her eyes opened; then her mouth. She sprang to her feet.

“Why Tom MacL——”

“Steady, miss,” warned the handy-man, stooping quickly to balance her launch. As he came upright he breathed softly, “Please!”

Handing up the squirming Growlo she smiled kindly at the *Gleam's* employee. “I didn’t know you at first, Tom. How are you? You seem to have a nice position. A fine yacht——” Her glance flicked over him, over the length of the *Gleam*. She was a tall girl with a drawling voice and dark-lashed blue eyes. The blue eyes had a mocking expression as they rested on Tom in his sailorman’s jumper.

“Thank you, miss,” muttered the handy-man, who looked anything but happy and pleased to receive these assurances of good will. He looked, as Frances informed Mr. Renny afterward, mad enough to bite nails.

Fifteen minutes after the launch had departed it was back, this time sliding along the port side to the bow where the handy-man was moodily smoking his pipe and waiting for his betters to finish their breakfast. The *Loafalong's* boy handed up an envelope. “She says to give it to you. A tip for somethin', I guess.”

Tom, the envelope in hand, slipped down the hatch to the crew's cubby. He had noted a pair of brown eyes interestedly watching from the bridge.

On a sheet of smart note paper embossed with the *Loafalong's* burgee was scrawled:

Simply have to know all about it, Tommy.
You come right over and tell me or I give
the whole show away. D.

And he knew she was capable of just that. He knew Doris Twombly. Three years since he'd seen her—that summer before he started for India. They had played around together at Bar Harbor while the *Vagabond* lay at anchor beside the

Twombly yacht. Maybe if he hadn't been starting for India in September—but that was nonsense, she'd only been amusing herself with lonely young Tom MacLeod. Celia and Cliff had so many things to occupy them ashore. Not a thing that girl was afraid of—and she had a devilish streak of mischief in her, too. He'd better go over. He could slip aboard the *Loafalong* on his way back from market. And he'd make his call in his handy-man outfit, serve her ladyship right if she purposed to receive him aft and quiz him. She might have seen he didn't want to be recognized and have had tact enough not to butt in. A man would have had more sense.

Miss Twombly's blue eyes, mocking between fringes of lashes, looked him over—duck breeches, jumper and saucer cap in hand—as he was ushered down the *Loafalong's* deck by a Jap steward. She was extremely smart in her frock of white shantung, with hoops of jet swinging at her ears and she lounged in a low chair on the *Loafalong's* after deck where rugs and potted plants and little tables set about gave the effect of a luxurious outdoor living-room.

She seemed honestly glad to see Tom MacLeod but was naturally consumed with curiosity over

the circumstances in which she had discovered him. She had heard about Cliff and Celia and had wondered about Tom. Of course he would be cruising now on the *Vagabond*—but why under these peculiar conditions? And why was his old *Vagabond* now posing as the *Gleam*? Her father wasn't aboard the *Loafalong*—luckily for the MacLeod she inferred. And of course mamma didn't know one yacht from another. They expected a lot of guests to join them at York Harbor. But what *was* it all about? Tom had simply got to tell her. Laughing eyes assured Mr. MacLeod of her suspicion that he was up to some preposterous if not reprehensible mischief.

Tom thought the best way to enlist her sympathy and ensure her coöperative silence was to take her, partly at least, into his confidence. He told her about the sale of the *Vagabond* and his disappointment about a summer cruise, and how he had seen the newspaper advertisement for a handy-man and decided to apply for the job.

“I got it,” finished Tom, “and here I am.”

The mocking blue eyes contemplated him speculatively. “Some lark, my word! I can't seem to make it fit my conception of you though,

Tommy. A lot of fellows might have done it—for a lark. But larkishness to that extent doesn't seem just in your line. Unless three years in India have changed you a lot."

Mr. MacLeod having nothing to say to this she continued, still with her mocking smile:

"Which is it, Tommy, golden locks or the one with the deep, deep brown eyes?"

"Neither one," the *Gleam's* handy-man looked dignified, "takes any extraordinary personal interest in me."

"Jameson, you say their name is—um. Of course you know who *she* is, Tom?"

"Who is?"

"Why, Brown Eyes."

"Do you?"

"I do. But if you don't"—she leaned forward and smiled—"I wonder if some true friend of yours oughtn't to tell you?"

"Miss Jameson didn't appear to know you," retorted Mr. MacLeod.

"No, but I know her all right. A good many people, Tom dear, know her." Under the quizzically arched brows the blue eyes regarded him with what seemed to be profound compassion. She was enjoying herself hugely, Tom could see

that. "No, Tom, I don't think I shall tell you ——"

"I haven't asked ——"

"If she hasn't told you all about it I'm not going to. You're quite a big boy now, you know, Tommy, and old enough to look after yourself." Suddenly she doubled up in her chair. "It's the funniest thing I've run across in years. It's priceless. But I'm not telling a thing—oh no! Far be it from me to give a sister woman away. I'll tell you this much, though ——"

"Better not tell me anything," said Tom stiffly. He rose. How had he ever found this girl attractive?

"Glad you find something so amusing in the situation," he remarked. "I scarcely think the affairs of my employer would have any personal interest for me. Or that Miss Jameson would care to have me advised of them ——"

"Advised—advised," she shook with laughter again. "Oh, Tom MacLeod, you'll be the death of me. Are you going? Well, good luck to you. But since you mention the word advice, take a little from—from one who wishes you well, Tommy. Watch your step, old dear. You're in

a ticklish position even if you don't want to know about it. My word!"

He stopped short on his way across the deck. "Look here, Doris, is there any reason you know of why my presence on that yacht is harmful to—to anybody on it?"

"Not if"—she looked straight at him, her eyes serious now—"you remain simply the yacht's handy-man." She walked beside him toward the steps. "You are quite right, I have no business to tell you that girl's affairs—if she hasn't told you. I doubt not you'll find out before the end of this precious cruise. She doesn't know me because she never met me. I happened to be visiting this spring in—in her town, and I saw your 'Miss Jameson' at the country club."

Tom was in the tender now and had picked up his oars. The lazy blue eyes slanted down at him over the *Loafalong's* rail.

"You might ask her," the drawling voice followed him as he rowed away, "if she ever heard of anybody named Geggie."

CHAPTER XVIII

GEGGIE. Now where had he heard that name, Geggie?

Tom cogitated over it all afternoon. He had known about some Geggie, but when? And in what connection? Something disagreeable it seemed to be. In his past there had been a Geggie and the very sound of the name aroused remembered dislike.

He went over names of his college mates. Of prep school chums. Names of men at the training camp and in France. Names of people known by Cliff and Celia. . . . Ah, now he was getting warm! Geggie pocketed itself with something relating to Celia. Try as he would, however, he could not pin the memory down.

If Tom had belonged to the petticoat gender he would probably have mentioned "Geggie" in the presence of the Jameson trio and then watched facial expressions. But if there was nothing oblique (as has been related) in young Tom's glance, neither was there anything oblique in his

methods. If "Geggie" meant anything to Emily Jameson some day she would tell him about it. Sooner or later she was going to tell him all about everything, just as he was going to tell her all about himself.

Arriving at this, he sat back suddenly on his heels (he was splicing a rope up on the bow deck) and gazed off at the shore-line of Squam. What reason had he to assume that Emily Jameson and he were going to tell each other everything? Nevertheless, far down under the stern decision with which he dismissed this impossible presumption lurked the perfectly certain conviction that they *would*.

Anyhow, he wasn't going to puzzle any more about Geggies. And as for leaving the *Gleam* because of any ridiculous warning of Miss Doris Twombly's, it was too absurd. That girl was a mischief-maker. He recalled the Doris Twombly of three years ago; her impish love of teasing and her propensity to stretch the truth a bit if so be she could torment her victim of the moment. If, as she so kindly advised him, remaining on the *Gleam* was likely to hurt himself—well, he would take the risk of that. If it was likely to hurt Emily or Frances or Cousin Phœbe the probability

was they would know it, and he wouldn't be here.

He'd given his word to help Emily Jameson and so long as his presence on the *Gleam* was helping her, on the *Gleam* he proposed to stay. That was that!

He decided not to impart any of the information that had been pressed upon him to Ted Renny. He wasn't quite certain how Mr. Renny would be affected by these hints and innuendos of the lady of the *Loafalong*. He intended to stick to the *Gleam* himself and wasn't going to be bothered with arguments for or against.

Nobody had betrayed special interest in his visit to the *Loafalong*. At luncheon Ted Renny had tried to rag him about it and Frances had offered some teasing comment to which he had made mumbling reply: Girl he used to know years ago. Friend of his mother's. Curious of course to find out why he was employed on a yacht. After that the subject, to his relief, was dropped.

It was a dull afternoon though. The playwright's typewriter clicked away steadily on the bridge. The two girls (Tom discovered by reconnoitering with the tender) were loafing with magazines under the cockpit awning. Cousin Phoebe

was probably dozing in the cabin. The *Gleam* lolled sleepily on a still blue sea. Tom would have gone ashore but was afraid he might run into that woman again.

The unshaded bow deck was blistering hot, so Mr. MacLeod sought his cot in the crew's cubby and went to sleep.

He was roused by the brisk voice of Mr. Renny who stuck his head through the low doorway from the engine room.

“Pipe how our trusty lookout standeth the first dog watch! Heave-ho, matey, skin aloft while I'm liftin' the hook. Ours for the bounding main.”

Tom sat up yawning. “What time is it?”

“Just went four bells. Do you get me? Order is: up anchor and away. We're tired of this here anchorage. Fact is,” explained Mr. Renny, “too many yachts around. It distracts the crew. So we're off ——”

“Off where?” Tom brought his feet to the floor.

“To Maine, bless you. Why linger here when Maine's our destination? At least that seems to be the idea.”

“But great Jupiter!—we can't start to-night. Why didn't you call me earlier?”

“How’d I know you were aboard? Right at the climax of my third act; genius spattering all over the place. But I hear you were spied sneakin’ off in the tender and it was assumed you were taking tea on the *Loafalong* ——”

“Oh, get out of here,” entreated Mr. MacLeod. “I’ve no doubt you insinuated that bright idea yourself.”

“Why not?” grinned Mr. Renny and slammed the sliding door to cover his retreat.

But when the handy-man presented himself aft for orders it transpired that the urgent reason for departure had naught to do with his unimportant movements in the way of renewing ancient friendships. Mr. Renny, the *Gleam*’s owner informed him, had observed a suspicious looking launch hanging about, and one of the men in the launch had a red beard. It had been a red-bearded man, Emily reminded him, who had frightened her so, trying to climb aboard the *Gleam* up Indian River. Didn’t Tom think they might start at once?

“But that seventy-mile run to Maine, Miss Jameson! In the dark—not even a moon till toward morning. I don’t like to do it, honestly I don’t.”

Mr. Renny thought they ought to start at once, he was informed. (Since when had Mr. Renny constituted himself courier of the party?) Tom produced several perfectly reasonable objections to this wild idea of a night trip northward but all the time Emily's foot tapped the deck and her little chin had an obstinate tilt.

Finally, "Perhaps, Tom, you have made an engagement for this evening? Of course I dislike to interfere with your plans ——"

If this was intended to annoy her handy-man it failed signally. Tom was only distressed.

"My plans are your plans," he looked at her straightly. "I don't approve of taking that trip at night, but if you want to go—wherever you want to go," he added recklessly, "all right, we go."

Whereupon she was suddenly all smiles and most sweetly reasonable. She didn't want to urge Tom against his better judgment. Of course he was captain of the yacht and she would abide by his decision. But—and oh, how wheedling brown eyes could be!—she did so want to start at once. And wouldn't it be fun to pick up the lights all along the way? He could show her each one . . . why of course she intended to remain on

the bridge all night. She'd had a wonderful sleep this afternoon.

Thus it was that a very contented party slipped out of Squam harbor just after the boom of the sunset gun. All but Cousin Phœbe who expressed dark doubts of their ever seeing Portland and announced her intention of sitting up all night with one of the life preservers buckled round her. The suspicious launch had taken a party of womenfolk aboard and set forth up Ipswich way for a sunset jaunt (after the *Gleam's* riding lantern had been hoisted, Tom noted that,) so the yacht's nose was turned southward into the river passage to Gloucester.

“High water to-night or it couldn't be done,” their skipper assured them, but nobody bothered about that. Tom was supposed to look after such details. The river was beautiful, serene and still, reflecting the turquoise and rose of the sky. And picturesque vistas opened up ahead as the *Gleam* picked her way through the tortuous channel and between the great clumsy buoys. Mr. Renny fetched his guitar from the crew's cubby and tried to make his lyric tenor sound robusto in a rollicking sea ditty:

“I chanced to meet a sailorman that once I used to
know;
His eye it had a rovin’ gleam, his step was light and
gay,
He looked like one just in from sea to blow a nine-
months’ pay.
And as he passed athwart my hawse he hailed me
long and loud:
‘Oh, find me now a full saloon where I may stand
the crowd.’

“Now, all together,” urged Mr. Renny, fingers hovering over a mighty chord: “Bringin’ home the *Rio Grande* ——”

None so joyous as Mr. Renny it seemed to be faring once again toward the bounding sea away from confining harbors. His exuberant spirits inspired them all. Even Emily seemed irresponsible and care-free. They had to wait for a draw-bridge to be opened and it was dusk when they slipped under the second bridge through swirling water of meeting tides and came out into the breeze-swept expanse of Gloucester harbor.

“Oh, beautiful!” breathed Emily, her mood of laughter stilling as she drew nearer to Tom at the wheel. The strong ocean breeze whipped an amethyst sea. Twilight softened the shore-line with its quaint peaked roofed buildings and ancient dories drawn up on a shelving beach. Masts of old fishing schooners towered in black silhouette

against the evening sky. Eastern Point Light glowed clear and crimson and beyond it sparkled the red gleam of the breakwater light. From an anchored warship a radiant ray whipped the purple dusk, sweeping sky and water and shore. The strong salt breeze and the invigorating fishy tang in the air. . . . Gloucester, unforgettable in any light, most unforgettable viewed thus at even-tide from the sea.

“The summer people come and go, and play a while and paint a while,” mused Tom, “and their foolish little boats frisk about the harbor, but always Gloucester remains—the Gloucester of fishing folk for generations. Look at those old fellows anchored over there,—whalers. The *Seal* and the *Walrus*. I’ve been aboard both. Think of the storms those old ships have weathered and the men who have sailed in them—sturdy and steadfast as the granite of this Cape itself. My mother’s people,” he added shyly, “were New England folks. I suppose that’s why it means such a lot to me.”

Emily stood beside him, the ocean wind blowing her hair. The ray of whipping light from the warship flicked over the *Gleam* and touched the girl’s face, lifted to Tom’s.

“And some of that granite is part of you,” she answered. “It’s what one feels about you; your steadfastness. It makes people who know they are like those foolish little summer sailboats—playing about, feel ashamed. I—I wish I had some of that New England granite in me.”

The *Gleam* passed through the white ray of the searchlight and was gone, out in the darkening reaches of ocean. Her ruby and emerald running lights glowed jewel-like against the night, and her tumbling wake stretched back, a creamy trail across black water.

In that moment when, picked out by the searchlight’s moving ray, she had passed, milk-white across the dark, the engine of a launch swinging round the breakwater from the northward ceased its clamor. The launch drifted on the swells and a red-bearded man at the wheel called to another man lounging beside a girl aft.

“Get that, Bill?”

“Sure did. Convinced now?”

“Golly,” the man at the wheel chuckled, “if beatin’ it out at night after hoistin’ his anchor lantern to fool us didn’t convince me I dunno what would! Hittin’ it up for Portland, you reckon?”

“Yeah, Portland or Newburyport or Kenne-

bunkport or any one of a dozen ports. I told you we ought to stick around."

"Shucks!" retorted the red-bearded man. "He's got 'em aboard all safe. And we can do fourteen to his twelve. I ain't worryin'. I'll telephone down the line and find out where he puts in. With that tonnage and the tide droppin' he's on a long jaunt for a deep water harbor."

CHAPTER XIX

THEY had left the splendid alternating flash of Isles of Shoals behind. The white blaze on Boon Island too, and the ruby eye of Cape Neddick gleamed far astern to port. It was past midnight and the moon had come up over the ocean's rim, an old, old moon that gave but faint radiance; but to Tom's infinite relief there was now, instead of menacing blackness ahead, a dim grayness. Dark bulks of reefs or white lines of breaking surf would at least be discernible.

As yet, however, the course was safe and clear, a straight run northward for a couple of hours until they should reach the lightship off Cape Elizabeth. They ought to pass the lightship, he thought, about half-past two. Then would come the ticklish business. He was running slowly hoping that kindly dawn would overtake him before he had to negotiate that worrisome passage into Portland harbor.

In truth Tom was deeply anxious. Not only the old *Vagabond* but a very precious freight of human souls was entrusted to his hands this night and the easy assumption of his charges that everything was safe because he was at the helm made

the greater his own sense of terrific responsibility. Colossal nerve for *him* (Tom MacLeod reflected) to be taking this boat by night over a course he had never essayed by day, a difficult course even in sunlight and to one familiar with every inch of the way. It looked to young Tom about the biggest job he had ever tackled, but somehow he had got to put it through and not let the others know how increasingly nervous he felt with every mile the yacht gained northward.

“Hot coffee and ham sandwiches,” announced Emily at the top of the galley steps. “I made Ted Renny fix up something after dinner. Where are we?”

“Somewhere off Ogonquit.” Tom pointed to the distant shore-line, a shadowy streak between the grayness of sky and ocean. “We ought to pick up Cape Porpoise in a few minutes.”

She had changed into the white frock and red sport coat that Tom liked so much better than Brother Emerson’s outfit, and had tied around her head and low over her forehead a deep blue ribbon to keep her hair from flying in the crisp breeze.

Cousin Phœbe was asleep, she reported, with the life preserver on the foot of her bunk and

Ming locked in his traveling basket, and Ted Renny and Frances were lounging on the lazyback in the cockpit. Mr. Renny seemed more anxious about followers in their wake than about perils ahead.

“Let him do the worrying.” She drew a deep breath, facing the tumbled expanse of ocean to eastward. “Isn’t it glorious, Tom? I’m going to be happy to-night and I’m not going to spoil one minute of it worrying about what’s behind or ahead.”

She poured out the coffee and handed him cup and sandwiches as he ate his lunch with one hand on the wheel. They made a merry meal of it. Then he suggested that she take the wheel while he dashed to the crew’s cubby for his tobacco pouch.

“But what am I to steer by?” she demanded helplessly. “I can’t see a thing ahead but water. How on earth do you set your course?”

Tom laughed. “Well, for one thing there’s the moon to eastward. Keep her just where she is, so you see her without turning your head. And there’s Boon Island Light down astern. You want to see it over your right shoulder. If you get it over your left shoulder you’re off the course.”

When he came back in less than five minutes she was tremendously proud of herself and thrilled by her sensation of responsibility: guiding the yacht all by herself into the dark. He let her keep the wheel, lounging beside her with his pipe. They had lost Boon Island now but Cape Porpoise Light twinkled ahead.

“Suppose anything happened to it and it went out. And there wasn’t any moon.”

“There’d still be the stars,” Tom reminded her. “You’d be surprised how many old salts steer by the stars—without even knowing the names of ’em.” He told her about an old Gloucester fisherman who always found his way home when beyond glimpse of shore lights by “ ‘Keepin’ the dog star just to stabboard o’ the masthead.’ He insisted it was the dog star because it shone during dog-days. When I told him the dog star was Sirius and didn’t appear till Thanksgiving time he sniffed at such ‘book-larnin’ tommyrot.’ The dog star was the dog-day star, common sense and any sailor would tell you that. And I’ve found a lot of old seagoing fellows with the same notion.”

“What star is it?”

“Arcturus.” He showed her how to find it by continuing an imaginary line from the curve of the

Dipper's handle. All they would have to do, he pointed out, would be to keep a course parallel with that imaginary line between bright Arcturus and the Great Bear's tail and they would be moving safely northeast by north on the long run between Thatcher's Lights and the Portland Lightship.

"Starlight," breathed Emily. "More lights that you show me, Tom. I've never thought about lights before or how much they mean."

The moon was higher now; it picked out lines of silver on the swelling seas that rolled and rolled at them from the ocean to eastward and made the spray that dashed across the *Gleam's* bow a sparkling veil pricked with tiny jewels of phosphorescence. The moon's radiance showed Emily's face, eager and intent behind the wheel. Tom had never seen her look so happy as she did to-night. Beneath the ribbon bound low across her brows her eyes were shining. And her red lips were parted, not pressed hard together as they so often were when the little brooding line of trouble came between her eyes.

"Suppose there was a fog," she suggested, "and we couldn't see your old sailor's dog star or Cape Porpoise over there—what then?"

“You forget *this*.” Tom nodded toward the binnacle glowing steadily in front of the wheel. “By and by when we get past Cape Elizabeth you’ll see how our binnacle and the compass are going to find the way for us.” (He devoutly hoped they would! The nearer he got to the dreaded undertaking the more nervous he was feeling about it, inside.)

“The ‘binnacle light,’ ” murmured Emily. “It’s still another, isn’t it?”

“Another?”

“Another light.”

“And probably the most valuable thing on board to-night,” remarked Tom. He was thankful indeed that Cliff’s beloved binnacle had been included in the bill of sale when the *Vagabond* changed hands.

She turned a startled glance on him. “There isn’t any real danger, is there—going this way, by night?”

“I’d have preferred to do it by day.”

She was silent a long moment.

“I’m sorry, Tom. I shouldn’t have asked you to do it. It wasn’t that launch; it was—a silly reason.” She bent low over the wheel. “To see if you would go—if I could make you leave Squam

harbor just because I asked you to at a minute's notice.

“Oh, I'm ashamed,” she added, not allowing him to reply. “It was trivial of me. I've done trivial things all my life—just to get my own way. I've met everything trivially, and now—and now that I've come up against a big thing I've been trivial too. I couldn't meet it, and so I ran away from it. You've taught me things, Tom, you and your lights ——”

He was distressed. So little it took,—the least association of thought or swift flicker of some ever dogging shadow of memory—to dislodge her spirit from a brief pinnacle of joy. He too had felt happy to-night in their shared adventure, their aloneness on these wide seas. In her comradeship and in her laughter. He smoked his pipe, staring into the dark ahead. He didn't know how to answer her without saying more than he ought. It would be so easy to say something that might spoil their pleasant comradeship aboard the *Gleam*.

Of course it was a man she had run away from. Tom hated him. Some man who was trying to get her against her will. She had given some promise she hadn't courage to keep and was run-

ning away to think it over—to find some way out. How could a poor young engineer without a penny to his name except two measly railroad bonds hope to be the way out? Tom sternly kicked this ridiculous thought to the back of his mind. He could serve her, help her it might be to find the light she sought, but girls of Emily Jameson's class were not for the Tom MacLeods—since the MacLeod fortune had been wiped away.

Wood Island Light was visible now above the port bow. He told her they would very soon pick up the Lightship and the wonderful double light on Cape Elizabeth. But she cast the merest glance at the ruby flash of Wood Island.

“Why did you let me make you, Tom?—take this night trip, I mean.”

He was lighting his pipe, cupping the match in his hands over the pipe bowl. “I'm only your skipper,” he reminded her. “It's you who set our destination.”

For some reason she was merry again. “I'll have to be careful. Would you do anything I asked you to, Tom?”

He smiled at her as he flung his match overboard. “I reckon I would. Anything within reason.”

She swung the wheel petulantly. "Oh, now you spoil it all. You'd always keep a reserve of reason, wouldn't you, Tom? That's *you*."

"I have to take care of you. That's my job, isn't it, on this cruise? Suppose you told me to steer on the rocks, I'd have to refuse, wouldn't I—to take care of you?"

She sighed. "I might tell you to steer on the rocks,—better not trust me, Tom. But I'd know you wouldn't. That's the big thing about you: you make a person feel safe, somehow. It's the strongest feeling you give a girl, a sort of protect-edness. I've never felt absolutely protected before—like this. I—I like it."

And Tom had never had anyone to protect before—like this. He liked it too. This sole responsibility for someone's else safety, this warming consciousness of someone's complete trust. He wished they might go on interminably along this northward course, the night sea all around them, the night wind in their faces, the cleft waters singing past to foam and tumble in their wake.

A big fishing schooner drew out of the dimness ahead, an old two-master beating her way south-

ward on a long tack. "Getting an early start with a load of mackerel for Boston markets," Tom supposed. Emily gave up the wheel and leaned over the rail to watch the schooner pass. Her ruby port light winked at them as she swept by and they could hear the rush of water under her bows.

Mr. Renny came tumbling forward to the bridge. "Gosh, that fellow startled me! First boat that's passed us to-night, either way. What time is it?"

Frances was close at his heels. "He never heard four bells a minute ago," she jeered, "and a dozen boats could have come up on us if I hadn't kept watch. You've a lovely snore, Ted—sort of a tenor note that goes away up, the way McCormack does at the end of his songs."

"I have not been asleep one moment," asserted Mr. Renny indignantly. "Fran is the one who had a snooze. She never even saw that passenger steamer that passed to starboard. Didn't one pass, I ask you, Emily?"

"Certainly," laughed Emily, "since you ask me, Teddy, several of 'em passed both ways."

"'Fran,'" reflected the handy-man, "and 'Emily.'" Nobody seemed to take offence either.

Well, maybe Ted Renny could get away with it; he couldn't.

"Aren't we 'most there?" inquired Frances, yawning. "I'm so hungry but I suppose we can't have breakfast till we're at anchor. How much farther to Portland, Tom?"

They had come two-thirds of the way, she was told, and ought to make Portland by seven bells.

"That's half-past three, isn't it? And only just past two now. Goodness, what an endless night."

"It's an awful wide ocean to cross." Mr. Renny contemplated the tumbling billows to eastward. "Leagues and leagues of it. How far's a league, Tom?"

"A marine league is about three miles ——"

"Ha!" ejaculated Mr. Renny. "Three miles, eh? Might call it the League of Nations—unless," he mentioned dismally, "they decide on twelve."

Tom chuckled. Mr. Renny was now peering anxiously ahead. "What's that light off the star-board bow, Cap'n? Looks like another boat."

It was a boat, the skipper informed him: Portland Lightship. Whereupon Mr. Renny, opining that this anyhow was a craft they could pass without watchful fears, invited Frances to forage

with him in the galley. Presently they emerged, each carrying a huge swiss cheese sandwich, and discovered their helmsman bending earnestly over the binnacle while Emily read aloud from a yachting manual propped up near the lantern.

“ ‘ Get Cape Elizabeth lights N. W. and run for them until Halfway Rock bears N. E. by N. Then run N. by W. until you get Cape Elizabeth lights in range. Thus you are safely by Hue and Cry rocks and West Cod Ledge. Now steer N. W. by N. two and one-half miles and you are off Portland Head Light ’——”

“ Sweet Daddy! ” gasped Mr. Renny. “ No place for you and me, Frances. Let’s go back and finish our snooze. That is,” Mr. Renny offered politely, “ unless I can help you some way, Tom ——”

“ Clear out! ” growled the skipper. And then called after them apologetically, “ This is no time for fooling. You be ready when the engine stops to hop for’ard to the anchor.”

That night entry into Portland harbor Emily knew would remain one of the unforgettable experiences, one of the things that stand out as significant above lesser happenings. Still as a little mouse she crouched by the chart table, her

eyes on Tom. The glimmer of the binnacle lamp showed his face grim, intent, mouth set in a tight line as he studied alternately the chart, his compass and the gleam and flash of lights against the dark.

All of her future, surety of life itself, it seemed to Emily, hung upon that something Tom was finding in his binnacle and its relation to those distant lights at which he was constantly glancing. Never again, she knew, would she look at the lights at night with indifference; they would always have for her now some of the beauty and meaning they have for the sailor who sails the sea. She recalled trips she had made on Sound steamers between Boston and New York and her careless indifference about the steady and flashing points of light far across the dark when she happened to wake up and glance through her stateroom window. How much they meant—those lights, and how little the people who traveled to and fro, snug under their blankets, planning what they would do in town next day, heeded them.

Never would she see a light again across dark water without wanting to know its name. And thereafter it would be a friend to look for next time she passed that way.

She followed Tom's glance toward the white glow and red flash, glow and flash out in the blackness northeastward. Halfway Rock, he called it. How much that great light meant to mariners coming into Portland night after night, year after year! She had a curious feeling that it marked a half-way place in her own life, between what had gone before and would come afterward—that great light that seemed such a vital factor of this hour of groping through the dark.

She drew a long breath when presently Tom straightened up, face relaxed and smiling. "All right now!" And she came back to the wheel and stood beside him. The bad ledges, Old Anthony and West Cod were safely past. That was Portland Head, off to the left and across the channel Ram's Island. Just a straight run now to Spring Point Ledge, up the safe pathway of the diamond white ray and between the red sectors that indicated perils at either side.

"From gray sea fog, from icy drift,
From peril and from pain,
The home-bound fisher greets thy lights,
O hundred harbored Maine!"

Tom was jubilant. "We've done it, haven't we? You helped, you know."

"Next to the lights," amended Emily. "I've

always thought of lighthouses as warnings to keep off the rocks, but the lights are really guides, aren't they? Not warnings to keep out of trouble but guides to show you the way."

"You've got the idea, I reckon," Tom replied. "It's following the lights, not dodging 'em, that takes us safe home."

Dawn was breaking as the *Gleam* crept around the end of the Portland breakwater. Far down in the eastern sky, against a pale primrose streak that heralded morning glittered a silver star.

Tom gazed at it. "Aldeberan! I've heard people say it could be seen sometimes in July at dawn. It's a winter star, you know." He smiled down at her and noted how big and shadowy her eyes were in her white little face. "You're dead tired," he said remorsefully. "But it's been a great old night, hasn't it?"

"The greatest night in my life and the happiest—the very happiest, Tom." The brown eyes smiling up at him were suddenly full of tears. Mr. Renny was running forward across the bow deck to put over the anchor. Tom's hand, warm and strong and steady, caught hers as he turned from the wheel.

"Mine too," he whispered.

CHAPTER XX

ANY person who has stood for long hours behind the wheel of a small yacht, particularly if the cruise has been by night, knows that feeling of tremendous distance covered. Even though reason reminds that a fast train could have sped over the miles in brief time the sensation remains of a port of departure left far behind.

Tom knew that this feeling possessed Emily when she came out to a late breakfast in frock and sport coat with soft coils of hair undisguised by the Brother Emerson cap. She announced her intention of going ashore with Cousin Phœbe who wanted to have a doctor look at the injured arm. It seemed best not to discard the sling without professional sanction.

And of course they must see the Wadsworth Longfellow house, insisted Emily. It would be too dreadful to visit Portland without having a look at it. Frances elected to accompany Mr. Renny who deemed it wise before betaking himself to any sea-begirt isle to stock up with typewriter ribbons, cigarettes and other essentials of the dramatist's trade.

The busy handy-man, however, had plenty to

do on and off the yacht. Ice to get. Gas to put in. Tinkering on the engine to be done. He reminded Mr. Renny who emerged from the crew's cubby very spruce in white flannels, whose job it was to carry the market baskets ashore. "And take the big one," advised Tom. "You want to stock up with several steaks and two dozen chops and all the stuff you can buy at the delicatessen place. We're not likely to get much beside fish on that island. Bring a lot of fresh vegetables too. You better take both baskets ——"

Mr. Renny looked dismayed. "All dolled up like this? Say, old thing, couldn't you do the marketing?"

"I could not," said the handy-man firmly. "And it's your job. Meet me at the post-office if you like and I'll give you a lift with one of the baskets. You can park them at the market if your joy in Portland depends on escorting Frances round."

Tom himself would have liked to spend the morning escorting Emily round. He loved Portland and wished he might have wandered with her through its elm-shaded streets where people never seemed to hurry and the fine old houses in their fine old gardens had such serenity and dignity.

Portland air always seemed to have a cleaner freshness than air in any other city. It made you breathe deep and feel light hearted and vigorous. Maine air, strong and salt and always with a sting of coolness in it. Perhaps this evening Emily and he could walk on the Eastern Promenade and look out over Casco Bay and the "islands that were the Hesperides" of Longfellow's boyish dreams.

Emily. For the first time, that morning, Tom as he whistled about his work began to wonder whether a poor young engineer might not after all venture to have dreams. Two thousand dollars in bonds and a good job assured weren't so bad. A lot of fellows, at twenty-six, hadn't as much as that. Of course this chap who was after her was rich, but his money didn't attract her or she wouldn't be running away from him. Poor little, harassed, unhappy girl, she wanted something in a husband besides dollars. "Protected"—she longed to feel protected. Well, if she'd give Tom MacLeod the right he'd protect her. To have her always to protect and take care of . . . Tom drew a long breath.

When they got to that island he would get the story out of her. And tell her about Cliff and Celia —

Suddenly he stopped whistling and stood, wrench suspended in air. The thought of Celia brought reminder of the panel.

Here he was, alone on the *Gleam*, with the day before him. A chance of chances to search for his mother's message.

But somehow he had a strange distaste for doing it.

It came to him with a shock of surprise that the *Vagabond* now was less a reminder of cherished associations of the past than the background of very present living interests. He was happy on the *Vagabond* as he had never been in those old days. Never, then, anyone depending completely on him. He tried to envision Cliff and Celia and old Saunders in their familiar places, but what he saw, eyes staring at a picture of Portland wharves framed by one of the engine-room ports, was a night sea and a distant light. Under his feet was the beat of the engine and close at his elbow a little woman thing——

Comradeship! For the first time in all the years he could remember the total absence of loneliness.

Nevertheless—he picked up the wrench that had dropped with a clatter—nevertheless he had to get

that message of Celia's. It was what he had taken the job for and now was the time, if ever. He selected screw-driver and chisel from the toolbox and walked aft to the cockpit. The cabin door stood open and from the doorway he could see the panel marked by the tiny swastika. It wouldn't take him a minute. . . .

He went down the steps into the cabin. But this wasn't Celia's cabin any more—or Cliff's. Cousin Phoebe's embroidery trailed from her workbag on the table. Growlo's basket stood in a corner. And on the port transom was a coral and gold mandarin coat. Either he must kneel on that coat or shove it out of his way. And beside it her little sewing-basket and that blue swimming suit; she'd been mending it maybe. Yes, her sewing-basket, for in it was that vanity thing-a-ma-bub he'd found in the pocket of the red sport coat the day of the beach picnic.

The *Gleam's* handy-man retreated hastily from the cabin. Some other time he'd search back of the panel. He couldn't, positively couldn't do it this way: sneaking into the place and rummaging. He felt like a bounder, invading that feminine sanctuary. He couldn't get back to the bow deck fast enough.

But though he hadn't brought with him papers hidden for him behind a panel, he had brought something else. Sitting on his pipe cot in the crew's cubby he looked at it—a little vanity thing-a-ma-bub made of pink ribbon shirred up to imitate a rose. He drew out the tiny powder-puff and touched it ever so gently to his face. It smelled sweet—like some flower or other. The same fragrance lingered about her when you stood quite near her.

What a fool stunt—to swipe a girl's powder-puff, of all things! Yet chaps who had filched handkerchiefs had made sonnets about them, and if a handkerchief that only whisked across a nose, why not a powder-puff that had touched her cheek? And that pretty place under her chin. Celia had been given one of those ribbon things shaped like roses; it was to tuck in the bodice of a dance frock she had said. Maybe Emily had worn this one like that. Gosh, it was a priceless treasure, handkerchiefs be darned.

He wrapped the priceless treasure carefully in a clean handkerchief and looked about for a safe place to stow it away. He'd like to keep it on him but of course that idiot, Renny, would spy it

when he undressed. So Tom locked it in the suitcase with his mother's letter and then jumped in the tender and rowed, whistling, ashore.

At the post-office he found letters forwarded by Mr. Avery and wrote the lawyer a brief note asking that further mail be sent to Monhegan Island. While waiting for Ted Renny he read his letters. One was from old Malcolm Avery himself and contained the miraculous good news of five thousand dollars unexpectedly retrieved from an overlooked bit of property Celia had owned in Bridgeport. That was a heartening addition to MacLeod assets. The other letter was from his aunt Judith up in Newburgh, bidding him welcome home and asking him to come and visit her. Later he must be sure to go.

"Oh, here you are," hailed the cheerful voice of Mr. Renny at his elbow. "Left 'em snoopin' round Mr. Longfellow's house."

Cousin Phœbe had finally decided on a doctor, he reported, picking out the name she fancied most from what seemed to be an embarrassment of riches in the way of available medical advice. "You'd think Portland was a healthy town," quoth Mr. Renny, "until you see the doctors'

shingles. Three to every block pretty near. Or maybe they have an extra high average of babies down here in Maine."

He accompanied Tom into the postmaster's room where arrangements were to be made about forwarding mail to Monhegan. While Mr. MacLeod did the talking Mr. Renny prowled about, inspecting notices and advertisements tacked against the wall. Tom suspected he was flirting with a pretty girl who sat behind a typewriter, so frequent were the glances she sent at the engaging figure of Mr. Renny. Not many merry eyed young chaps in spick span flannels happened in her dull environment every day.

But that there was motive in these apparently aimless wanderings Tom discovered. Mr. Renny was intrigued by a certain bit of paper pinned to the wall near the stenographer's desk. It seemed to be a mimeographed notice of some sort and Tom wondered why Ted didn't stand still and read the thing through if he was so interested in it. Fate, however, assisted Mr. Renny. There was sound of commotion outside and the clang of a fire-engine gong. The stenographer sprang from her chair and rushed to the window and in that same instant Tom saw Mr. Renny deftly remove

the paper from its pin, shove it in his pocket and slide out of the room.

He had vanished when Tom came out of the post-office but arriving at the dock (laden with both market baskets) Mr. MacLeod found Frances and Cousin Phœbe in a high state of indignation.

“Ted asked us to meet him for lunch,” stated Frances wrathfully, “and when he got there he grabbed Emily by the arm and rushed her off as if she were the only person in this party of any consequence. Said he wanted to show her something.”

“And he ordered me—*ordered* me to take my arm out of the sling,” added Cousin Phœbe, “when he knew how nervous I’d be in the street with people bumping into me. I don’t know what got into him.”

“Here he is with the tender,” Tom pointed across the water.

“What’s up?” Tom whispered as he helped the *Gleam’s* steward stow the baskets in the boat.

“Enough and plenty,” growled Mr. Renny with a glare of warning. “I’ve taken Emily out to the yacht. Get the rest of ’em aboard and make it snappy.”

In the engine room a few minutes later he showed Tom the crumpled paper. It was a mimeographed notice addressed to "Postmasters." What there was of it, as Mr. Renny had hinted, seemed to be enough and plenty:

"You are requested to watch for the following person or persons who may inquire at your office for mail. Emily Nugent Geggie, twenty years old, height, five feet six inches, weight, about 125 pounds. Dark chestnut hair, brown eyes, vivacious, imperious personality. Believed to be in company of Phœbe Hageboom, middle-aged, stout, carries arm in sling.

\$500 reward is offered for information leading to discovery of whereabouts of these persons. This notice is for post-office officials only and is not for public posting as the matter is confidential."

Followed the address of a legal firm in the city of Buffalo.

Surprisingly enough Emily did not seem seriously disturbed over the post-office notice. Both Tom and Ted Renny agreed that it must be handed to her at once. This was not a thing they could fairly keep from her even to save her worry. But when she read it she looked relieved. She turned to Frances. "It proves there isn't a suspicion about the yacht. These notices have evidently been sent to all the big cities. I knew he'd never think of the yacht! Uncle would, for he knew how crazy I was about this boat. But Uncle

won't be back before the end of August. We're safe till then ——”

“ Mightn't your uncle suggest the yacht in a cable? ” demurred Frances.

Emily shook her head. “ He'd be on my side enough to keep still even if he did suspect. If I can only wait till Uncle gets home ——” She turned to Ted Renny. “ You're sure no one followed you when you took the notice? ”

Mr. Renny was positive. He took great pride in his generalship: hustling the wanted persons separately out of the locality.

“ Phœbe and I shouldn't have gone ashore together,” she sighed, “ but it did seem so many miles from home. Anyhow no one who saw us would connect us with the *Gleam*.”

Tom glanced at Cousin Phœbe. He was thinking of that picnic on the beach and the man and woman who had evinced such interest in the coincidence of brown-eyed girl and stout lady with disabled arm in each other's company. Those two at any rate connected the party with the *Gleam*. It looked as though one of them might have been a post-office employee. And the eye-glass case they had failed to return contained the name and address of Miss Phœbe Hageboom.

It seemed to Tom now that Emily ought to be told about the missing eye-glass case but Cousin Phoebe's pale blue eyes meeting his in shocked recollection of the incident, implored him not to break his promise. She drew him aside when he left the cabin to go forward and start his engine. "I can't bear to have her know I was so careless," Cousin Phoebe moaned. "She'd never forgive me, Tom. It would"—the poor little stout lady dabbed at her eyes with her handkerchief—"it would just spoil the trip for me."

As the *Gleam* swung out past Peak's Island the helmsman found himself pondering over that name, Geggie. Her name, and Doris Twombly had known it! But why in time did he dislike the sound of it so? What or whom did it remind him of? And why did it seem connected with his childhood?

CHAPTER XXI

MONHEGAN—isle of enchantment. To those who have known its spell; who have breathed the tonic of its air; who have fared with the morning across its wind-swept downs and lingered in gracious afternoons amid its forest aisles; who have listened to the sea's thunder on its ledges and dreamed beneath some brooding cedar atop a turf-carpeted cliff, spirit following vision unto

. . . the distance dim,
Where the white flutter of a friendly sail
Gives greeting, ere it sinks beneath the rim,

to these will come with each recurring summer a wistful longing to go back.

The days came and went. Bright days when the sea was blue and gulls shrieking and settling on the harbor rocks gleamed dazzling white, when flowers made brilliant patches of color against weather-beaten houses and sunshine turned to gold old lobster traps on silver, sparkling sands. Days when great winds blew and Tom and Emily sat spellbound on the ledges watching white-flecked green seas thunder and crash and break in

tumult of foam. Days when ocean fogs shut them in and the tiny steamer from the mainland crept warily round the point, and the great fog-horn on Manana sent its hoarse warning across the waters.

The two made pilgrimages—to Blackhead to watch wild seas beat against the cliffs; to the cathedral woods where surge of the sea and surge of the wind in the pine tops chanted an antiphonal chorus; to the lighthouse where they climbed the stairs and touched awesomely the shining fixtures of the great light. They bathed in the icy sea—a valorous plunge, a frantic scramble back to the swimming ladder, a gasping recovery of breath on deck, and then all day exhilarated vitality so that they skimmed the downs with a sense of being bodiless, tireless.

Tom stored his handy-man's jumper away and roamed the island decently in white flannels. Every morning he went down to the wharf with his tin pail and waited, with the smocked artists, for the little steamer that fetched milk from the mainland. Mr. Renny's typewriter clicked madly through the hours and Frances stood guard over burning genius, glaring at any member of the ship's company who raised a voice in that vicinity.

But at eventide the playwright descended to status of good cook and served agreeable dinners. They dined inside the cabin now and chef and handy-man added, if less distinction from a yachting standpoint, vastly more hilarity to the feast. Afterward Mr. Renny read them bits from his drama or they played bridge with ports closed and a fire in the galley stove to keep off the chill. On warmer nights (rare at Monhegan) they sat on deck and Mr. Renny sang to them.

Emily sang too. And often she sang to herself, little snatches of gay tunes that Tom heard as he passed the deck house windows and smiled happily because he knew that she was happy. And though he could not sing, singing words were often in Tom's mind. For days he could not place the thing that haunted him—lines that kept running with lilting joyousness through his head while he polished the yacht's brasses or swabbed the deck mornings. An island thing—— Then he remembered: *Le Gallienne's Bahaman Song*.

And love shall be the island laws,
Love all its business, all its play,
The world and all its silly saws
A foolish legend, far away.

Each day were Emily and Tom drawing closer

to each other. He knew and she knew. And both knew that the time was approaching when there would have to be admission of it between them. Sometimes it seemed—that breathless moment—to be upon them but always to Tom's bewilderment it was gone, flickering ahead like some will-o'-the-wisp that would not be overtaken and caught. Emily had signed a truce with worry and made a compact with play—that seemed to be it. Time enough for serious things; this pleasant playtime was too good to spoil. Ever she avoided the personal and when he tried to pin her down she was off and away, an elusive something in her flitting as lightly from his determination as her bodily self flitted over the ledges, laughing eyes daring him to pursue her.

She knew all about him now; he told her one night when they sat on the cliff watching the moon rise over the rim of the ocean. She liked to go at dusk over the hill beyond the lighthouse to a special nook they had discovered, a flat rock where they could sit, backs against the cliff with the sea murmuring a hundred feet below; and where they could watch, when at minute intervals the great flash gleamed across the dark, the play of light along the ledges.

“Out there,” she pointed to the red and green glimmer on a ship beating in from the southeast, “they don’t see the ledges—only the big light.”

He smiled, understanding her thought. “They don’t have to bother about the ledges. They’re looking ahead now for the next light—Pemaquid. And after that, Seguin. When that fellow sees our Monhegan flash he knows he is only four hours from home and supper and the kids ——”

“You’re always talking about getting home, Tom. Home means a lot to you, doesn’t it?”

He was filling his pipe, tamping down the tobacco with a finger. Home, to him, meant Emily, but he dared not say it. If he did she would spring up in that way of hers of avoiding issues and spoil their happy moment. So he smoked in silence, watching the green speck of light on the schooner creep westward until it disappeared behind the jutting point of old Whitehead.

“What do you think is the best thing life can give?” she asked presently, snuggling her shoulders down to more comfortable position against the cliff and getting out her cigarette case. Brother Emerson had taught her the unfortunate habit and now she could start a cigarette without

strangling over the initial puff. Tom noticed that whenever she was annoyed with him the cigarette case, which he detested, came out of her pocket. Sometimes she teased him and sometimes she provoked him but Tom knew how sweet she could be.

He drew at his pipe imperturbably. "What do you?"

"Freedom. Lack of responsibility about other people's lives."

There he disagreed with her. His idea was exactly the opposite; ties, and responsibility for people who were near and dear had been his wistful longing all his twenty-six years. He said aloud:

"Then you only want to skim life, Emily; not to find its real meaning."

She pitched the unfinished cigarette over the ledge.

"Maybe. I'm skimming it now, I suppose. And I find skimming very satisfactory."

"Do you?" The great light behind them streamed out and he turned and looked into her face. "But it can't last long like this, you know, my dear."

The hard look in her eyes softened.

"Tom, let it!" she whispered. "I want it to

last—just as long as we can.” Then she changed the subject hastily. “Did you ever see the ocean so still? It’s like—like a great quiet breast breathing. Hear the little sigh after every breath, down there where the water laps up on the rocks.”

Flood tide, he explained. And a windless night. Didn’t she remember, in “Crossing the Bar”:

“ . . . such a tide as moving, seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless
deep
Turns again home.”

“Turns again home,” she repeated. “There you go again, Tom. Home’s the last place I want to be reminded of.” (Truly she was in a contrary mood to-night.) Instantly, however, she was contrite and it was the irresistibly sweet way of her to reach over and touch his hand with hers. “Always thinking about Emily, isn’t she? I know what you mean about home, old dear, but you see I can’t go home—I haven’t any home to go to ——”

“Nor I, Emily.”

“You!”

“Not a soul on earth I can call my own.”

“Tom!” She moved up closer beside him on

the rock, slipping her hand, warm and comforting, into his. "Tell me about it."

So he told her—about the schools and the summer camps and his war year and the three years in India. About Cliff and Celia and their happiness, and the studio in New York where a cot was put up for him during his brief visits. He did not tell her about the *Vagabond*. He could not tell her yet that it was his father's yacht they were living on. Or about the panel. She would insist upon instant search and his faith with Celia must be kept. But it was comforting, with the warm little hand nestling in his, to tell about himself and his boyhood. And the things that because of those homeless, wistful years he craved, he knew—by the close pressure of her hand, she understood.

Then she told him about her own girlhood; the death of her father when she was eleven and the after years when she traveled about with a gay-hearted, pleasure-loving little mother. California and Palm Beach in the winters. Dashes to Paris in springtime for clothes. Dashes to New York in the autumn for theatres. "I never had time to go to school regularly," said Emily, "but we did have grand times, Mummy and I. We were as happy as birds. Then she died—two years ago

—and I went to live with my uncle in Buffalo. I couldn't bear it. Uncle is kind—if I could have him all by himself. Mummy was his little sister and he understood her—and me. But his wife, my aunt Adeline,—oh horrors! One of those Seventh Day Baptists. Everything I wanted was wrong. Everything I loved was contemptible. Even Ming—that woman wouldn't let me have Ming in the house and Mummy had babied him so he couldn't understand. Many a night I've slept out in the garage with him. And her two daughters, Hannah and Martha,—can't you see them, with those names? Hating my pretty clothes and my boy friends dropping around in roadsters to take me to the country club. And then, Percival——”

“Who's Percival?” Tom shot this before she could catch her breath.

“Their brother—my cousin. He's worst, the sanctimonious kind trying to make love on the sly.”

So there was a brother Percival—that kind. Tom thought now they were getting somewhere.

“Percy really disliked me—and all my ways. But there was Mummy's money. Not so much, but I suppose he had his eye on it. He pretended

he wanted to reform me. Odious! Going to Aunt Adeline with tales about me and the set I played with out at the club. I know Uncle wanted me to care for Percy. I'd like to have pleased Uncle but I couldn't do it. And so—and so ——”

She stopped short and after her hurried speech, the words tumbling along and indignation making her voice higher than its usual low contralto note, the silence was sudden and complete. The sea breathed and sighed against the rocks. The big light flashed out and showed the ledges rimmed with gold.

“And so,” remarked Tom, “you ran away.”

“Yes . . . I ran away,” she finished rather flatly. Very obviously there was something left out. Something rather important. But she had told all she intended to—for the present. She got up, shook her skirts and said it was time to get back to the *Gleam*. And all the way home she chattered about inconsequent things.

But Tom thought he could fit the pieces together, smoking his pipe on the bow deck before turning in. Uncle wanted her to marry the sanctimonious Percival. Perhaps, as trustee of her fortune the uncle desired to keep it in the

family. Some pressure had been brought to bear on her, or they had some hold over her and she had been forced into a promise to this Percival. It was he, of course, who had sent out the mimeographed notice and whom she intended to evade until her uncle returned from Europe.

Yes, the pieces seemed to fit pretty well. There was an odd bit that didn't seem to fit; Tom couldn't imagine what should cause such overpowering fear of that Seventh Day Baptist suitor. It didn't seem reasonable to be so terrified of such a fellow. And not only Emily was afraid, but also Cousin Phœbe and Frances. (Who of course Tom now knew, was no sister Frances but a devoted girl chum.) Tom almost hoped this Percival would put in an appearance. The MacLeod could settle *him* all right.

The more one thought of it, this fear of pursuit did seem exaggerated—a little hysterical. The yacht was Emily's, bought with money invested for her by her uncle. Suddenly a dark possibility flashed across the MacLeod mind: how had she secured funds to finance such an expedition? It cost something to run the *Gleam* (even without weekly wage for a crew) and Emily, according to Cousin Phœbe, had not a large allowance from

her guardian. Unpleasant suggestions anent rifled safes, raised checks and forged avuncular signatures darted through Tom's mind. The weaker sex when it was determined on getting its own way was prone to ride over all obstacles.

But anything like that he simply couldn't attribute to *her*. His wonderful girl. Or to Frances either. He was ashamed of himself for even thinking of it. . . .

"What's that, Tom?" hissed Mr. Renny, poking a disheveled head through the hatch.

"What's what?" inquired Mr. MacLeod who was knocking out his pipe.

"Didn't you see that launch?"

"Launch?" repeated Tom vaguely.

"It's been all the way around us three times. Just slipped aft down the port side."

"Ted, old bean, you've got launches on the brain." The Renny head ducked as Tom's long legs slid through the hatch. "That's the third launch that's worried you this week. The harbor's free, you know."

Tom was unlacing his deck shoes. "I've told you what I decided about those launches back at Squam and Marblehead. They'd nothing to do with that post-office business. Somebody got sus-

picious because the *Gleam* looked almighty like a yacht with another name and we are cruising without a club pennant. Either they got tired or else we gave 'em the slip."

"That's what *you* think." Mr. Renny hunched up his blanket.

"There isn't anything else to think. You're looking for trouble, Teddy, me lad."

"Blowed if I'm not," grunted Mr. Renny, and rolled himself up in the blanket.

He was right. It came next day.

CHAPTER XXII

AN excruciating experience, Cousin Phœbe pronounced it afterward. And for a whole week Mr. Renny who had (with the most innocent intentions, he insisted) plunged them into it, was sent to Coventry.

The day had opened auspiciously. The great play was finished and the manuscript, cherishingly wrapped and corded, was borne to the wharf after lunch to be delivered to the express company's representative. Frances carried the play and Mr. Renny staggered under the load of one of the green-painted boxes. His typewriter also was voyaging. He thought he might as well ship the thing home now as he didn't intend to do another lick of work and it would cheer the old man to note arriving luggage. "Show him I'm on the way," observed Mr. Renny kindly, "even if he doesn't quite get from where. I'll forward the boxes one at a time. Dad loves a good joke."

So the green box and the play departed together and the *Gleam's* steward, in high spirits, prepared the evening meal. Cousin Phœbe, now that she could use her arm, liked to potter in the galley and frequently had dinner well under way when the young folks came trekking back from some

expedition ashore. To-day she had made a pudding which Tom and Emily were contemplating with awe as it stood on the shelf that did duty as a sideboard. In the galley the lovely tenor of Mr. Renny was caroling "Yes, we have no bananas," as he banged saucepans about. It had come on to rain and ports were closed against the dreary evening. Cousin Phoebe, who was setting the table, suddenly straightened up.

"Who's that?"

Emily went white as chalk at the sound of footsteps on deck. The steward, appearing in the galley doorway, had a startled expression. Tip-toeing across, he peered through a port.

"Holy mackerel!—we're pinched," he ejaculated, and ducking through forward cabin and engine room he disappeared in the crew's cubby.

And then occurred the excruciating experience.

They were searched. Ignominiously searched fore and aft, from sampson post to lazyback. Not even Miss Phoebe's maiden suitcase escaped the desecrating hands of the determined persons (one of them had a red beard) who seemed to have some preposterous notion that the *Gleam* was harboring spirituous contraband. And shipping it to grocers,—hadn't one case gone to-day to a firm

that manufactured pickles and sauces for table use?

At this moment Tom's ears heard a faint splash up forward.

The intruders regretted discommoding the ladies. They felt extremely sorry about that, but they had had the yacht under surveillance some time and in the proper performance of their duty it was necessary to make a complete search. . . .

Another splash up forward.

Emily, cheeks very red and chin very high (but eyes as Tom could discern showing distinct relief that the intruders were not on more personal business) bade them go ahead and search if they wanted to. It was too ridiculous to attribute bootlegging enterprises to her yacht.

"Where's the one that had the shack up Indian River?" demanded the red-bearded man. "He was aboard just now."

Tom had heard another splash—but six green boxes had been brought aboard. He hoped Ted would have time. The young cub! He'd fix him for this.

But when the search party reached the crew's cubby (where the steward was shaving) and pounced on a green-painted box in plain view, the

yanked-off lid revealed an assortment of wires, plugs, bulbs and other items of a dismantled radio outfit. What was eatin' the fellers anyhow? Mr. Renny wondered. Sure, he'd sent home some of the boxes! The one to-day with his typewriter, and others with books and track outfits. His father was a sort of grocer, yes. He made pickles. Could you beat it? asked Mr. Renny.

But when the launch had vanished in the rain he mopped his brow with a dish-towel. "Gosh, that was a near squeak," he confided to Frances. She turned her back on him. Frigid silence met Mr. Renny's outburst of apologetic explanation. The orbs of Frances regarded him balefully, those of Cousin Phœbe with tearful reproach.

Of course he had never dreamed his silly stunt would start anything like that, he told them. The boxes had been found cached on a lonesome beach, salvage for anybody who discovered them since in a matter of such unnegotiable merchandise none might with safety accuse another. He was going to send the stuff to the old man, he said—sort of a peace offering before he blew in. The old boy would be tickled pink at the priceless surprise ("genuine Scotch if you'll believe me.") Sotto voce to Tom who remained unimpressed.)

and the prodigal would get off scot free so far as reproaches anent his vagrant summer were concerned.

“That’s all over now,” he sighed. “But anyhow a couple of quarts traveled with that typewriter this morning.”

Cousin Phœbe’s pale blue eyes regarded him unhappily. “I do hope, Teddy, college didn’t turn you into a steady drinker ——”

Mr. Renny reassured her. “Don’t worry, Miss Phœbe. These days there ain’t any steady drinkers. Only” —he winked solemnly at Tom— “only Volsteady drinkers.”

By the end of the week, however, Mr. Renny was back in their good graces. His sunny charm could not be resisted indefinitely and his chastened mood touched their hearts. Frances and he began to spend their days on one of the old mackerel schooners whose kindly skipper allowed summer folk to go along when he approved their manners aboard. They came back at sunset bronzed by wind and sun and reminiscing about the wedges of apple pie the schooner’s cook had handed out and the thrilling moments when a school of mackerel had been sighted and boats were sent out to spread the nets. Sometimes on these bright afternoons

Tom took the *Gleam* out into the sparkling ocean and they loafed about to eastward of the island, within sight of its majestic headlands and the sentinel lighthouse rising above the cliffs.

In the second week of August the bright weather ended. Ragged clouds came scudding up from eastward and the ocean boomed at night against the cliffs. There was a moaning sound in the pine tops in cathedral woods. Old fishermen prophesied an early sou'easter this year. Tom, coming on deck before breakfast, spied a new boat in the harbor. For a fortnight the *Gleam* had been the only yacht anchored among fishing craft and launches of the summer residents, and he looked with some curiosity at the handsome cruiser that had come in. Then he recognized it as the Twombly yacht.

Mr. Renny had recognized it too and there was some good-natured ragging at breakfast, but Mr. MacLeod was the only one who looked annoyed. Emily smiled serenely. Doris Twomblys didn't signify with her now, the little secret smile said. She asked Tom if he wanted to walk to Squeaker Rock after lunch; the east wind must be blowing up a fine surf over there. She had been avoiding walks alone with him for a week and he was in

the state of any yearning lover held at arm's length by feminine caprice and desperately anxious to have the words over and done with that should put an end to uncertainties and bring peace of mind.

He passed Miss Twombly as he swung happily down to his tender with the morning mail but she only nodded brightly and continued her conversation with the people who were with her. The *Loafalong* seemed to have a large party aboard. Tom thought they had put in to ride out the storm that was surely on the way.

Ted Renny, at luncheon, had great news to impart. The play had been accepted! Not, however, as he had fondly hoped, by a famous producer. His agent wrote that five of these beings had turned it down but a motion picture concern saw promise in it (if their continuity writer did a little doctoring,) and Mr. Renny was urged to come at once to New York.

"I'll not consent," stormed the indignant dramatist, glaring around the lunch table. "The hounds even suggest changing my title. Movies! —pah." Did they imagine he was going to have his play—his really intellectual play that he'd slaved at all summer hashed up into a five reel

thriller for plumbers and their best girls to haw-haw and boohoo over? Holy cats!

“Don’t break the dishes, honey.” Frances rescued a teacup that was bouncing off the table as a belligerent playwright banged his fist. “And it’s a lot of money, Ted.”

It *was* a lot of money and Mr. Renny, looking meaningly at Frances, opined it could be used. At any rate it would defer consideration of pickles for a good long time and meanwhile one could do other plays. So Mr. Renny sent off a telegram by the afternoon boat advising his agent that he would run down to New York by next evening’s train. Of course he would come back, he replied to Emily’s anxious glance; this party on the *Gleam* couldn’t lose him yet a while. So Emily, eyes relieved and happy again, repaired to the cabin to make ready for her walk. Frances and Ted Renny immediately set out on a long hike to Pulpit Rock. They must make the most of every minute, Frances said, if Ted was to be gone four whole days. Tom smiled as he watched them up the road; there wasn’t much doubt about the ending of *that* affair. He rowed back to the *Gleam* after putting them ashore and went up to the bow deck to smoke a pipe while waiting for Emily.

The harbor had a bleak look and the *Gleam's* motion was more pronounced than usual. Long swells were coming in from the sea and though the sun was shining the sky was misted over with wispy lengths of cloud with curled-up ends—sure sign of rain coming. Over on the *Loafalong* the sun struck something vividly yellow. It was the sport coat he had noticed on Doris Twombly that morning. She was standing at the rail and had a glass leveled at the *Gleam*. What the deuce was she looking at, and what business was it of hers anyway? He detested that girl!

Now she was fiddling with ropes of the signal mast. What on earth was she doing—amusing herself by hauling signals up and down? Nonsense, she was too experienced a yachtswoman for that. And neither was she amusing her guests; she seemed to be alone at her foolishness. Well, now she had her signal or whatever it was, hoisted. Tom recognized the International Code symbols of ball, cone, and drum but the combination was unintelligible without the code book. He wasn't very curious. Emily was a long time. This afternoon he was going to pin her down, make her tell him whether there was any hope for him. No, by Jove, he knew there was—from her eyes! They

were not going to drop away from his any more, hidden by her lashes. And they were not going to laugh at him and tease him any more. This time he'd make them look straight into his. Sweet eyes—and sweeter lips. Not another minute was he going to be played with. He'd ——

The yellow coat on the *Loafalong* was at the rail again. And the leveled glasses too. By the great horn spoon, was that girl impudent enough to be signaling *him*? He stared hard at the combination on the mast behind her. It looked like this:



Tom got up and, sauntering to the bridge, hunted up his yachting manual in the chart locker. It was plain enough, symbols 2—3 and 3—2—4:

You are running into danger.
The enemy is in sight.

More of that girl's mockery. Probably she thought she was funny. If she imagined she could arouse even irritation in him by these crude attempts at humor she was mightily mistaken. He saw Emily coming up the deck and hurried to meet her at the steps.

As they rowed ashore he glanced toward the *Loafalong*. The signals had been taken down.

CHAPTER XXIII

“Tom—tell me some more about those anchors.”

Emily sat, feet curled under her, high up on Squeaker Rock. The sea boomed against the cliff a hundred feet below. Far out, a steamer's smoke made a long streak against the horizon. Emily wore to-day a white woolly coat and a silver ribbon was banded across her forehead and around her hair. Behind her was the dense green of cedars. Tom thought she looked, in her white coat and with the silver ribbon above her dark eyes, like some sprite of the woods come out on this high rock to view the sea.

“Anchors?” he repeated vaguely.

“Yes—those anchors that hold us fast when the big gales come. I've been thinking a lot about them. Tom, when you said that: about having the right kind of anchor, did you mean—God?”

“Why”—he was trying to recall their talk on the sands, weeks ago—“I suppose I did. Or maybe I meant character, or will. The thing that keeps us from going adrift.”

“But you said ‘a strength not outside ourselves.’ That would be will, wouldn’t it, not God? Some wills”—she sighed—“make pretty weak anchors.”

“But surely God is not a strength *outside* ourselves! Isn’t God, rather, the very best *in* ourselves? That Something in us able to resist, if we call on It, impulses to drift or to evade what we have to face.” Tom spoke shyly. He had never been one to talk about such things, even in France where the other fellows had thrashed out these subjects. “Isn’t it God inside us—the God-part of us, that makes us strong to resist things? A—a sort of anchor we can throw out when a big gale threatens. I suppose that’s what I meant.”

Her eyes were following the trail of smoke out at the ocean’s rim.

“I think it is very cruel of God,” she whispered passionately, “when a big gale comes and a little ship isn’t strong enough—to let it smash on the rocks.”

“But don’t you see, Emily, that is putting God outside again; shuffling off personal responsibility on Him? We have to do our own preventing. If we go adrift it’s because our anchor wasn’t enough of a dependence. We weren’t gripping

close enough on a strength that would hold us fast. I reckon in every one of us is an anchor big enough, and in every gale a strength to grip—that would hold us. But the anchor must be fast to the strength before the gale strikes.”

She looked forlornly over the sea. “I don’t want to be responsible for myself. I don’t want to fight gales.” Suddenly she turned and buried her face on Tom’s shoulder. “I want some other anchor,” she sobbed. “Mine isn’t any good. I don’t *want* to do my own preventing and deciding. I’m so—tired.”

“Emily!” His arms went round her.

But she drew away and sprang to her feet. “It’s raining. Come—we’ve got to hurry.”

From a ragged cloud overhead a smart spatter of rain beat on the rock and on the tops of the trees behind them. She caught his hand and made him run with her. It was a long trail, first through underbrush and stunted cedars and then down the aisles of the cathedral woods. The rain came pelting at them even under the thick pine branches. Tom tore off his coat and they ran, holding the coat above their heads, until they arrived, breathless, at a clump of cedars near the road.

Emily laughed. "We're exactly like that old painting,—the man and the girl fleeing before the storm. Only instead of a silly gauze scarf we have your good old coat. It's sopping wet, Tom."

He put it on over his wet shirt. The rain was driving in silver sheets outside their shelter and they huddled close under the cedars.

"Your face is sopping wet, too." He took a folded handkerchief from his pocket and wiped the raindrops from her cheeks. She was still panting from her run and her eyes, laughing up into his, were very bright.

"Emily!" he whispered. "I love you. I love you."

He drew her close, his cheek—wet too with the rain—pressing against hers. He felt her sway against him and when he lifted his head she lay in his arms, her eyes closed. The rain dripped through the cedar branches on his head, stooped low over her face.

"Dearest, look at me!"

She shook her head, her eyes still closed.

"Emily, I love you. Do you love me?"

Her dark eyes opened and in their sweet wonder he read his answer. He crushed his lips on hers and her arms in the white coat-sleeves went up and

clung about his neck. He did not know how long he held her so, but when at last he raised his head a sunbeam slanting through the trees was touching her hair. The spurt of rain was over and only drops from the cedar branches thudded on the needle-carpeted ground. Tom still held her fast. Her head was buried against his coat now and he stroked very gently the waves of her hair. Tom's gray eyes were beautiful as he looked down at the brown head nestling in his shoulder. His little girl. His! To take care of. To guard forever. He had won her—she was his!

It came to him that he had not heard her utter a word. He must hear her say it. He bent and whispered, "You love me, Emily, don't you, dear?"

"Yes, Tom." A muffled voice against his sleeve.

"Forever, Emily? You're going to let me take care of you always?"

"And face things for me?" Her hands gripped his sleeve.

"Of course, my dearest."

"And find a way out ——" Suddenly she stood away from him. There was a great light in her eyes. "Oh, you will!—you *will*. You are so

strong and so wise, I know—I know you'll find a way, Tom."

"Why, of course," said young Tom capably. He buttoned the white coat closer under her chin, his fingers trembling as they touched her throat. After this she was his to take care of, against the world. "Of course, my dear. You're not to worry any more about anything."

They came down the hill hand in hand. Tom talked to her about his work and its promise. What a winter they would have out in Wyoming where she would come with him of course! They'd have roaring wood fires in the evening when he got home to her. And they would ride over the trails and through the canyons. He'd teach her to ski. . . .

She said scarcely a word all the way back to the *Gleam* but he didn't notice, he was too happy.

His high mood continued through dinner. He made absurd jokes and laughed at the nonsense of Mr. Renny who was foretelling with dismal detail the coming battle of genius seeking to protect its own against the onslaught of the movie horde.

Miss Phœbe said very little. Her pale blue eyes, anxious and unhappy, went again and again

to Emily's face. But Emily was gay too, flushed and bright-eyed and merry over Mr. Renny's nonsense. She never looked at Cousin Phœbe once—and only once at Frances. That was when Frances, on her way to fetch something from the inner cabin, suddenly paused behind Emily's chair and putting her hands beneath Emily's chin bent her chum's face back so that the brown eyes had to meet hers.

Tom saw Frances shake her head as her eyes smiled down into Emily's. Then her hands brushed Emily's cheeks caressingly as she moved away. There had been something of sadness in the little shake of her head and in her down-bent glance and Tom wondered at it. But he was too happy to think much about anything but his own mounting joy.

When dinner was over they went up on the bridge and Ted Renny got his guitar. Dusk had come early and it was cold with a bleak wind blowing from the southeast. Across the harbor the *Loafalong* was ablaze with lights but the *Gleam* showed only her riding lantern and the glow of Cousin Phœbe's reading lamp in the cabin. Tom brought out rugs and they wrapped themselves up until they were muffled lumps in

the darkness of the bridge. Under the big rug Tom held Emily's hand close while Ted Renny sang. He was singing to-night to Frances who sat beside him on the bench by the windshield. Across the bridge Tom and Emily nestled close on a cushioned seat. Mr. Renny's lyric tenor did very well with the McCormack type of song and to-night his songs were sentimental and sad. Emily protested:

"Oh, do stop those harrowing *parting* things, Teddy. We all know you're leaving her for four days but why wring our hearts? You're coming back."

"And with oodles of money," reminded Frances. "Sing something triumphant—sing that D'Hardelot thing. I love it."

Ted truck a chord. Then he hesitated. "Emily's contralto can do it better ——"

"No!" Emily's voice came sharply out of the shadows. "I don't want to. Sing something else, Ted."

But Mr. Renny was pleasing Frances this evening. He went on with the accompaniment. Tom felt Emily stir uneasily as the phrases, in their beautiful slow measure, crept across the dark:

“Because you came to me with naught save love,
And hold my hand, and lift my eyes above,
A wider world of hope and joy I see—
Because you came to me.”

Tom's hand under the rug gripped Emily's. His thrilled happiness, his outpouring consciousness of care for her, of protectiveness, held her still in the dark beside him. But the hand in his was cold as ice.

“Because God made thee mine, I'll cherish thee,
Through light and darkness, through all time to be,
And pray His love to make our love divine . . .”

She got up suddenly, dropping the rug to the deck. “I'm cold. I'm going in. Good-night, everybody.”

And not again that evening did Tom see her. Cousin Phœbe, when they shouted presently from the galley that a rarebit was under way, came to the swing door and warned them to be quiet. Emily was tired and had gone to bed, she told them.

Tom, himself, did not expect to sleep a wink that night. He was too happy. He wanted to go over and over it—that moment under the cedars when he had seen the wonder in her eyes and had bent and kissed her. He wanted to hug to his heart the realization that always, always

she was going to be his and that loneliness was gone from his life forever.

But almost immediately he fell asleep, and he dreamed of Emily. They were together on the *Vagabond* with the night wind in their faces and far ahead was a light that flashed . . . one flash, four flashes, three flashes. The light of Minot. *I—love—you* it was flashing and Emily and he were watching it across wide seas. Then the dream changed: he was in a dark place and Emily was calling to him. Her voice was frightened. . . .

He woke and found himself struggling to throw off his blanket. It had been no dream—she was calling to him. And her voice was frightened.

“Tom!—I want you.”

He leaped from his bunk and thrust his head through the hatch. The strong east wind ruffled his hair. It was very dark but he could see Emily standing near the hatch, balancing on the unsteady deck.

“Tom, I want you. Can you get dressed and come up here?”

“Of course, my dearest. What is it, Emily?”

“I just want you. I—I’m afraid.”

Her voice came quavering through the dark.

“Be with you in five seconds. Go to the bridge, out of this wind.”

He watched until she was safely on the bridge. The night was so black that but for an electric torch she carried he could not have seen her five feet away. Careful not to wake Ted Renny, he slipped into his clothes and drew on a heavy sweater. Then he caught up a blanket from his bunk and made his way to the bridge. The *Gleam* was rocking about, straining at her mooring. Not a star was in sight and on the easterly wind came the boom of heavy seas breaking on ledges to southward. Emily was crouching on the bench near the windshield. Tom lighted the binnacle lamp and in its dim glow he saw her face, white with dark eyes staring up at him. She had on the coral mandarin coat and its vivid color gleamed where the light struck it.

He wrapped the blanket around her and felt her shivering under his hands. He tried to speak lightly:

“Now tell me what frightened you so. Do you know what time it is, you crazy child?—just went four bells—two o’clock in the morning.”

“I couldn’t sleep, Tom. I was afraid. I had to call you ——”

“ Did you hear anybody prowling around? ”

“ No,—I was just afraid.”

“ But of what, dear? ” He sat beside her on the bench, arms tight around her. A shuddering breath shook her whole body.

“ Emily! Tell Tom, dear.”

“ Oh, I can't—I can't tell you.”

He held her close but did not speak. And another long shudder went over her.

“ Emily, you must tell me. How can I help you if I don't know? ”

She shook off the blanket and faced round on him. In the glimmer of the binnacle lamp he could see her coral coat and above it her white, strained face.

“ Yes—I have to tell you. Tom, we can't have each other. I—I—am—married.”

CHAPTER XXIV

HE stared at her, eyes never leaving hers while the binnacle light and the *Gleam*, and lanterns on the anchored boats, and all his universe swung round in a dizzy whirl as though some horrible kaleidoscope were shifting the solid facts of his cosmos. When they settled back into place he seemed still clinging to her eyes. They looked back into his like eyes across some dreadful void.

“Did you say you were *married*, Emily?”

“I—I don’t know. I think I am married, Tom.”

He stood over her, hands clutching her shoulders. He felt her quiver under his touch. “Either you are married or you are not married, Emily. I want to know what you mean.”

She cowered away from him. “How can I tell you when you frighten me so——”

He dropped his hands and turned away. Across the deck he stood by the rail, drawing in long breaths of the cold, salt air—as might one who was suffocating. A fog must be coming in, out-

side; the horn on Manana was beginning to wail dismally. Over on the *Loafalong* the riding light went up and down, up and down, then across in a long arc. Behind him he heard Emily's teeth chattering. He came back to her and drew the blanket around her again, carefully,—gently, tucking it in at her shoulders and over her little bare foot that had dropped its slipper. Then he stood, leaning against the wheel, arms folded and hands gripping his elbows. "Now tell me," he said.

She wanted to talk now, to explain, to justify herself. Her words tumbled along incoherently:

"His name is Randolph Geggie. He is forty-six. But he doesn't seem old. He was so jolly and gay and kind to me. And I was so unhappy at Aunt Adeline's. I hated Hannah and Martha so—and Percival. I couldn't bear it. He said I could always live my kind of life if I married him. We would be young together—at the country club and with his car, and in a big house where my pals could come. And—and he loved my little Ming so much ——"

She was wringing her hands under the blanket.

"Go on," said Tom.

"I couldn't bear it any longer in that house.

I wanted to be free and gay and happy. So I said I would marry him ——”

“When was all this?”

“Just this spring. The wedding was June eleventh. It was at our house. Aunt Adeline wouldn’t have it at any church but hers and I couldn’t stand that. So it was very quiet and Uncle started on his trip abroad right afterward. He drove away to get his New York train just before we left for the west-bound train. We were going to California ——”

“You never went?” Tom suddenly unfolded his arms and came nearer to her.

“No. Something—something he said in the taxi frightened me. Oh, Tom, I was so frightened.” She stretched out her arms to him. He sat down beside her on the bench and pulled the blanket up about her again. “Poor little Emily,” he whispered.

She looked at him piteously. “I knew you’d understand, Tom. I just couldn’t face it. I couldn’t go on with it. All of a sudden I realized what a dreadful, awful mistake I’d made. When we got to the railroad station and it was bright with lights and I looked at him—he was walking away from me to see about our luggage—

he looked like some stranger. And so old—old enough to be my father. I—I guess I had sort of a panic. I jumped up and ran out of the station and took a taxi to Phœbe's apartment. I don't know where he went."

"You mean you never saw him again?" He crushed her in his arms, blanket and all. Across the terrifying void she seemed to have come back to him. Then he put her from him gently. It was a long way between the afternoon's happiness and this moment, a long, long way.

"Tell me the rest, dear," he said.

"I stayed with Phœbe ten days. We sent for Frances. There had been some talk, she said, but no big fuss. No one was sure whether I was missing, or waiting somewhere for him. Then I thought of the yacht. Uncle had taken me to see it in April and I bought my wedding clothes in New York on the way back to Buffalo. I met the shipyard people then, so they knew me when I went to get the yacht in June. Phœbe had a position in Uncle's office. He was away and she opened all the mail. She wrote on the firm paper to the shipyard people, telling them to put the yacht in commission and signed Uncle's name.

And of course she was there to get their reply when it came. Then she fell and hurt her arm and we had to wait another week. Fran came first—she is supposed to be staying with Cleveland friends while her parents are taking a trip to Bermuda. Then I came, and Phœbe came. I traveled to New York in Phœbe's clothes. There were a lot of wedding-present checks. Phœbe cashed them for me—that's how I got the money for the cruise. And—and you know the rest, Tom."

"What you have feared is that he will follow you?"

"I know he will. But I felt sure he'd never think of the yacht. He hates the water and never showed any interest in the yacht so I said little about it. Uncle and I kept it a sort of guilty secret between us. We were going to take the yacht through the canals to Buffalo and then spring it on Randolph and Aunt Adeline. I thought the yacht would be a place of my own where I could run away by myself when I wanted to."

She sat up and looked at Tom. "I never intend to go back. But I had to think things out and hide somewhere and the yacht seemed a safe

place. I knew if I could keep hidden till Uncle came home he'd do something ——”

“Do something?”

“Yes—to get me free.”

Tom smiled sadly. “I’m afraid that won’t be so easy, little Emily.”

She leaned forward eagerly. “But Frances says it’s not a real marriage—binding. That it can be annulled. Couldn’t it, Tom?”

“If he is willing—perhaps. If he’s the right kind of chap—knowing how you feel about it—he may be willing. But suppose he is not willing, Emily?” Tom didn’t believe any man would be willing, once given the right to possess her, to give her up.

“He won’t be,” she whispered, her hands wringing together again. “He won’t be willing.”

“Well, that’s all we’ve got to hope for.” Tom’s voice had a weary flatness. He felt terribly tired. Too tired to stay there and talk another minute. He got to his feet slowly, like an old man. “Do you know it’s three o’clock? You must go to bed now. Come—I’m going to put out the lamp.”

In the dark she drew close to him, pressing against him. “Tom, you will find some way, won’t you?”

“ I don't know, Emily. I'll try.”

“ Tom, you *must*. I love you so. I want you so. You've got to find a way, Tom.”

He disengaged the little clutching hands. “ I shall have to think, Emily. You must go to bed now.” He led her across the deck to the door of her cabin. At the top of the steps she turned and seized his hand.

“ Tom, you love me, don't you? Say so! I'm so afraid and it's so dark ——”

“ Love you! ” He caught her to him. “ Emily, Emily,” he whispered, his lips against hers.

Then he stumbled to the bow deck where he sat, back against the skylight, staring at the anchor lights, and then at the spectral boats as one by one they emerged, dim gray shapes on tossing gray water, as dawn crept over the hill of Monhegan.

CHAPTER XXV

EMILY did not come out to breakfast and since the gangway from galley to aft cabin was through her sleeping quarters they had breakfast on the bridge with the canvas curtains drawn—a dismal meal. The rain held off but clouds hung low and threatening over a gray sea and the east wind moaned fitfully.

Tom saw Emily embark with Ted in the tender when he went for the mail, but Mr. Renny returned alone. Emily had gone for a walk, he said. “I told her it was going to pour but she wanted to see the surf on the cliffs.” Ted carried a telegram for Frances. It had come on the morning steamer. The captain had advised passengers for the afternoon boat to wear oilskins; it was going to be dirty weather, crossing to the mainland to-day. Tom lent Mr. Renny his shiny suitcase since the green-painted box was obviously impossible for a jaunt to the metropolis, and the departing dramatist proposed to spend the morning packing.

Tom did not wait to see what Frances’ telegram

was about. He had to find Emily. She must be in desperate mood to fare forth alone in face of the coming storm. The tender was half-full of water after Ted's trip ashore so he took the old dory they had rented in order to have, always, one boat tied at the steps. Emily was not on the Washerwoman ledges where a throng of people sat, hats tied down, watching the splendor and terror of the sea as it piled up before the southeasterly gale.

And she was not on Whitehead. Or in their nook over beyond the lighthouse. Or on Squeaker Rock. Could it have been only yesterday that they had sat here and he had thought she looked like a wood-sprite in her white coat against the green of the cedars? He saw a moving speck out on Blackhead—a woman with skirts blowing in the wind. Somehow he got to Blackhead, he never remembered just how. When he came out on the high cliff he saw her standing at the very edge, gazing out to sea. She was holding her hat with both hands and the wind whipped her skirt straight backward.

He dragged her away from the edge. "What are you doing here?"

She stared at him, pulling away from his hand

and rubbing her arm. "Tom, you hurt me! What made you grab me like that? You frightened me."

"You frightened *me*."

She laughed unsteadily. "I wasn't contemplating a jump—if that's what you were afraid of. Don't worry, I haven't courage enough for that. I haven't courage enough for anything, I guess," she added forlornly. "I was thinking about those anchors—and not being able to face the gale."

They were walking back across the ledges, the wind behind them. She tucked her hand under his arm and looked up at him. "You're going to bring things right, aren't you, Tom? I'm just going to let you face things the way you said you would. You'll take care of me, won't you, Tom? And find a way?"

He stopped when they came to a drop in the ledges where there was partial shelter from the wind. Against the gray rock she was all white; white coat, white hat, white face. Only her eyes burned darkly, fixed on him.

"Have you thought it out, Tom?"

He stood before her, eyes looking straight into hers. "I thought till dawn. And I can only see one way, Emily: you've got to go back."

“Go back!” Faintly she echoed his words.

“I can’t see any other—honorable way. You say he’s a good man—kind. You married him of your own free will. Just because you have changed your mind you can’t take back your solemn promise—and throw his life into chaos. He hasn’t done anything unworthy. He loved you and asked you to marry him. And you did——”

Her eyes flashed. “I won’t go back. I won’t. Tom!—you pretend to love me and say that to me? Try to send me away from you—to misery?”

He stared at the sea. He couldn’t see any other way. All through his night vigil had been with him the traditions of his New England heritage, and stern Scotch traditions that had come down to him from dead and gone MacLeods. To Tom promises were things to be kept, sacraments and covenants things not lightly to be set aside.

“I can’t see any other way, Emily. If he is big enough—if he loves you enough to be big—after you have told him the truth he’ll find the way out for you. For us. But you owe it to him to go back. To face him like a woman and not

sneak and hide. Don't you see—don't you see, Emily?"

She had sunk on a low rock and was crouching, her face in her hands.

"I can't go back. Don't ask me, Tom."

He bent over her and laid his hand very softly on her hair from which the white hat had fallen. "I do ask you, Emily—for both our sakes. Do the brave thing! All the happiness you and I may have, God willing—if he is big enough, depends on your being big enough now."

"I can't." She shuddered. Then she looked up at him. "Suppose he isn't big enough. Suppose he tries to hold me. Can he? It wasn't a real marriage, Frances said so."

He knelt in front of her and held her hands. "Listen, Emily: suppose you and I had been engaged and I had been hurt—was at death's door. And the only way you could be with me and take care of me was to be married to me. And suppose, beside my sick-bed, a minister said the words over us. Wouldn't you consider yourself my wife?"

"Yes—I would."

"Of course you would. Well then, why aren't you married to him? Marriage is a vow, a prom-

ise in the sight of God. Whatever loopholes the law may afford, a vow is a binding thing. You are married to this Randolph Geggie and you've got to go back to him. That's all I can see. His generosity may set you free, perhaps, by making use of the human laws, but I can't see—I can't see, Emily, that there is anything for you to do now but to go back."

She rose and looked at him drearily.

"Then it's all over," she said.

"I don't know." He threw out his hands in a sudden despairing gesture. "I only know it's as far as I can see."

They walked back in silence, bending against the wind. She had to hold her hat down and never glanced at him once. As they came down the road to the wharf Tom saw a new yacht anchored beyond the *Loafalong*. Even in his tortured abstraction his eye took note of its trim lines; an express cruiser, he thought, come in to ride out the sou'easter.

As they rowed across to the *Gleam*, the dory bouncing on choppy seas, Tom spoke suddenly. "I can't stay on board, you know." She nodded. "After the storm I'll take you to Portland and you can leave the yacht at the shipyard."

On the *Gleam* they found confusion and excitement. Frances' telegram had been from the Cleveland friend. Her father had wired from New York that her mother was ill and they had returned on an earlier boat. Frances was to go at once to Buffalo to make the house ready for them. This telegram, opened by the friend with whom Frances was supposed to be staying, had made necessary a message to Monhegan. There was no time to be lost and Frances was packing furiously. She would take the afternoon boat with Ted Renny and get the sleeper that night from Portland. It was not likely that she would come back to the *Gleam* and if she could not come Mr. Renny would not. He was going through to Buffalo with her. Tom looked wistfully at Ted Renny; everything was clear and bright ahead for his love affair. No parents could object seriously to blithe Mr. Renny with the solid bulwark of the pickle business behind him.

Not a word of her own trouble did Emily speak to Frances. Tom saw her helping Frances pack, listening to outpoured plans and anxious fears about the sick mother. When the two girls hugged each other on deck while Tom and Ted

waited in the tender, Emily replied brightly to Frances' remorseful protest about leaving her.

"Don't worry about me, Frannie. You've been wonderful this summer. Tom will take the *Gleam* to Portland and then Phœbe and I will board somewhere. I'll write you." She stood at the rail gallantly waving until the tender reached the wharf where the little steamer was waiting.

Tom could not go back to the *Gleam*. He must walk. Buffet the wind. Tramp until physical weariness dulled the misery in his heart. He turned up his sweater collar and set off on the long hike to Pulpit Rock. He never remembered what he had seen or what he had thought of on that tramp in which a gray world of tossing seas, lashing tree branches and bending grasses swam before his sick eyes. He was buffeting wind and fighting pain—that was all he recollected of the afternoon. The rain came and deluged him but he did not care. Through its driving slant, as he approached the wharf, he saw the tossing yachts in the harbor. Most of them showed lighted windows though it was not dusk yet by the clock. The new yacht over by the *Loafalong* was brilliant with lights. Somebody had said it was the

Marcia, chartered by a rich westerner for a Maine cruise. . . .

Suddenly to Tom came a premonition.

That new boat—whose was it? Why was it here? Had Doris Twombly really meant something by her signal? Had she been trying to convey a friendly warning?

Tom's dory cut through the climbing seas. The *Gleam* showed not a single light. With a sick sense of certainty Tom leaped up the steps, down past the deck house, pounded on the door of the cabin.

No answer. Not even Ming's welcoming growl.

He flung open the door. The cabin was empty and all about were signs of hurried departure.

Almost immediately he saw the note placed conspicuously on the table. The light from the swinging lamp fell on the white paper with its penciled message. He caught it up.

"I have gone with Randolph on the *Marcia*. He has been here with Percy. I hope you are satisfied now.

"Phœbe will be with me. It's part of the bargain I made, and nothing is to be decided until we get to Buffalo and talk with Uncle. Will you take the *Gleam* to Portland for me as you promised? Good-bye. Emily."

I hope you are satisfied. The words leaped out

of the letter and cut at him. He sat on one of the transoms, the letter in his hand, and stared at the rug. *I hope you are satisfied.* But what else could he have done? What else was there to be done?

After a time he got up and went to the engine room to light the anchor lantern. Out on deck the storm was sweeping across the dusk, sheets of rain driving before the southeasterly gale. Through the rain he saw the *Marcia*, light pouring from all her cabin windows.

Emily was there, having dinner.

He went down to the galley and cooked some food for himself. But he could not eat. He pushed the food from him and went on deck again. The boats were grinding against the step, the *Gleam's* tender and the rented dory. He hoisted the dainty tender to the davits out of harm's way. Then he slipped on his oilskins and got into the dory. He rowed across the harbor to the *Marcia*. It took tremendous effort to keep the dory's bow up, in that wind. Rain slashed at his face and seas came over the dory's side until his feet were in a pool of water. Three times he rowed around the *Marcia*, looking up at the lighted windows, listening for voices. But he saw nothing but the

light, streaming yellow through the rain; and wind and sea made too much noise for any sound inside the yacht to reach him. In all Tom's life there would come no moment of more poignant loneliness than was his, this night, out on the storm-tossed harbor, the rain slashing at his face, lifted to the lighted windows of Randolph Geggie's yacht.

And there was nothing he could do. *I hope you are satisfied.* Well, she would come to see that there was nothing else he could have done—nothing else for herself to do but to go back and face her responsibility —

But she had not gone—he had sent her. And she hoped he was satisfied! That night when they had stood at the *Gleam's* wheel steering by the lights, she had told him he made her feel protected. How could he protect her, now, better than by sending her back to the man who had first right to take care of her?

He tied the tender and went up the steps wearily. Suddenly he longed for Celia. Oh, to open the cabin door and find Celia sitting at her little desk; to see her jump up in the old glad way and cry out to him: "Here's my boy back again."

He could get Celia's message anyway—no fear of interruption now. He lighted the cabin lamp and got to work on the panel. It took very little time to loosen the screws that held it to the wood-work. In the narrow space behind he discovered only a thick envelope addressed to him in Celia's handwriting. In his careful way, before reading the message, he fitted the panel back in place, slipping the envelope into an inside pocket of his coat. He was tightening the last screw when he stood rigidly still, listening.

Above the clamor of the storm he had heard Emily's voice, calling to him.

CHAPTER XXVI

HE dashed out to the cockpit and around by the deck house. Emily was holding a rowboat near the steps, afraid to come close in the heavy seas. Tom ran down the steps, water rising above his knees as the *Gleam* rolled. He caught the bow of the rowboat, drew it in and in a moment had lifted Emily up beside him.

In the cabin she flung off her streaming slicker. "They were ashore. I had to leave Ming. I took the other boat ——"

"You rowed over here, through that storm—alone? Were you mad? You might have been drowned."

She shrugged her shoulders. "Well, it wouldn't matter much, would it?"

"But what happened?" He stood staring at her, his face white as hers. Their young eyes held in a strained gaze.

"Phœbe's hurt. She went ashore with Randolph for something and slipped on the wharf. She sprained her ankle—badly. He took her to the hotel. She can't be moved to the *Marcia*. Percy is going to stay with her. . . . Tom—I

can't stay on that boat without Phœbe. The minute she was gone everything was different. He—oh, Tom, he is not good and kind any more. He is angry, fearfully angry. He talked—Tom, he's going to take me with him on the *Marcia*. He wouldn't let me go ashore to Phœbe. He threatened to lock me in the cabin. But there was no key so he couldn't. The man took him ashore and I rowed over here ——”

She came close to him, hands clutched against her breast. “Tom, take me away!”

“Take—you—away?”

“Yes, now—before he gets back and misses me.”

“But take you where, Emily?”

“Oh, anywhere! What does it matter? I won't stay on that boat alone with him. I'll jump into the sea first.”

“But, my dear girl, to-night? In this storm?”

“What does the storm matter? You've got to take me, Tom. If you have a spark of love for me you'll take me—now, before he comes back from shore.”

Young Tom passed his hand in a bewildered way across his hair. “But Emily, if we go together ——”

She glared at him, furious contempt in her eyes. "If you haven't courage," she flung at him, "you can say afterward it was my yacht and you were my employee and I ordered you ——"

"I am not your employee!" he retorted hotly. "I love you—you know that, Emily. And you know very well it is not the storm that makes me afraid."

Suddenly she fell, a crumpled heap beside the transom and began to cry. He had never seen a woman cry like that,—horribly, terribly, great sobs racking her slender body as she crouched, face hidden in her hands, on the rug. He spoke to her but she would not look up or stop crying. Her sobs filled the cabin—the night—the world; tore at the heart of him.

He gazed down at her, biting his lips to still their trembling as she crouched, sobbing, at his feet.

He stooped and touched her shoulder.

"All right, Emily. We'll go."

The *Gleam* crept around the rocks at the harbor entrance and out into the storm-wracked night. The steady throb of her engine bade defiance to seas that tossed her about like a cockle-shell and to wind that screamed like some pouncing thing.

Tom in his oilskins gripped the wheel. The binnacle lamp showed his face grim, with tight-set lips as he peered through the rain-slashed windshield. They were running without lights and Emily had switched off the cabin lamps so that moving lighted windows should not betray their passage out of harbor. He knew she was down there in the dark now, perhaps still crouching by the transom. But the terrible sobbing must have ceased. The gale continually shoved him off his course which he was trying to keep well to the south, in open water and away from islands and ledges near the mainland. He could not see Pemaquid Light through the rain but he thought he ought shortly to pick up Seguin, and from Seguin he would be able to see the Halfway Rock flash outside Portland harbor.

The door of the cabin opened and Emily came out in her oilskins. She stood beside him, facing the dark ahead, and neither spoke. When Seguin Light appeared out of the blackness she whispered, "Where are you taking us, Tom?"

"God knows," he muttered. "On the rocks, I reckon, Emily."

She drew close to him and laid her cheek against the wet sleeve of his slicker.

“No. I trust you, Tom. You won’t take me on the rocks.”

He looked down at her and the hard line left his lips and tenderness came into his eyes.

“No—never that, little Emily. You know it.”

Then he told her he was taking her to his Aunt Judith in Newburgh. They could get a train from Portland in the morning and be at Newburgh by night. “Then when I have left you with Aunt Judith ——”

She protested. He wasn’t going to leave her alone in Newburgh—with a strange woman! She wouldn’t go.

“You *will* go,” Tom told her firmly. “You’ve asked me to take care of you and I’m going to do it. You’ve tried to manage your own life your own way—and made a mess of things. Somebody else is going to manage it now. You’ll be safe with Aunt Judith ——”

“But what will you do?”

“I shall go to see him.”

“Him? You mean . . . Randolph?” She looked frightened. “Can’t he—can’t he make a good deal of trouble for you, Tom?”

“I dare say.” The MacLeod jaw had a set look. “But I am going. And to see your uncle too.”

You leave it to me, Emily. It's out of your hands now. Don't you think you better go down to your cabin and get some sleep?"

But she would not leave him. For a long time they stood silent, the rain, sweeping in almost horizontal sheets across the bridge, drenching their oilskins. Seguin Light gleamed clear now, ahead, and Tom was searching anxiously for the beacon he knew ought to be somewhere near, on Bantam Rock. It was increasingly difficult to keep the yacht on her course. She edged continually to leeward and Tom wondered if anything might be wrong with his steering gear.

Even as he wondered the wheel behaved in an astonishing way under his hands and below his feet the engine went racing.

He dashed down the ladder and up again. In the partial stillness that followed the stopping of the engine Emily's voice came sharply, "What is it?"

"The propeller—it's gone. I'm going to sink the lead. If there's bottom under us I can drop the anchor ——"

But he had no time for the lead. There was a crash, a sickening cant of the deck on which they stood and water began pouring in over the lee

rail. A great sea, white-crested, curved above the weather side and carried Tom and Emily with it. In a second they were struggling in the water.

CHAPTER XXVII

TOM grabbed for Emily as he felt himself flung across the rail. He caught at her sleeve and drew her to him and began to swim, terribly hampered by his oilskins.

Almost immediately he found his feet on bottom and surf was breaking around him. He dragged Emily up out of the pounding waves and put her on her feet. They were on a gravelly beach and behind them he thought were dense woods. The southeast gale had sent the yacht, helpless without her steering gear, broadside on this beach, and thirty feet from where they stood she was lying on her side, harried by the waves.

Tom thought very rapidly. It was, he knew, about flood tide and unless he could fasten the yacht in some way she would be carried out on the receding tide and lost, for undoubtedly in that smash some of her seams would have opened and she would sink in deep water. Unless the storm held for another twelve hours no succeeding tide was likely to be as high as this one, so if he could

only keep the yacht from going out to deep water there was good chance of saving her. He must save the old *Vagabond*!

He flung off his oilskins and his shoes and plunged into the surf. The bow of the yacht seemed to be well out of water but waves were washing over the deck house and the tender was smashed to bits. He fastened the anchor hawser securely at the bow and carrying the hawser ashore snubbed it around a tree at the edge of the wood and made the slack fast to another tree. The yacht lifted on a giant roller and the hawser strained—but it held.

Then he went out through the surf again and climbing aboard, made his way into the crew's cubby. Everything in there seemed to be fairly dry and he brought back several blankets, holding them high above his head as he waded ashore. The tide was falling already, he noticed. He made Emily sit on the sand and wrapped the blankets about her. Then he made another trip to the yacht and foraged in the crew's cubby for firewood. The rain had ceased but of course no dry wood was to be had on shore. He carried Mr. Renny's green-painted box to the beach and also several of the locker drawers, and what papers

and magazines he could find. With his wood from the crew's cubby he managed to make a fairly good fire. He wished he could get something hot for Emily to drink, but the galley, with the rest of the deck house, was hopelessly flooded.

He had salvaged his pipe and tobacco from the crew's cubby, and some cigarettes of Ted's which he offered, as forlorn substitute for food-comfort, to Emily.

But she shook her head—and then suddenly smiled up at him in the firelight. “You know very well I never smoked the horrid things except when I wanted to torment you. Do you believe I could possibly want to do that now, Tom, when I can only think how wonderful you are to me?”

He realized that it was almost the first time she had spoken since their plunge into the sea. Some women would have whimpered—complained bitterly about the cold and discomfort, or would have chattered, asking hysteric questions about possibilities of rescue. She had said almost nothing, doing what he told her to, helping all she could. The game little thing! In spite of his chill and wetness and worry Tom MacLeod knew he was a lot happier this minute, stranded and shipwrecked, taking care of her, than he would have

been, safe in harbor, alone on the *Gleam* with his misery.

He made her promise to sit still by the fire and taking his torch went off to investigate their whereabouts. He was gone only twenty minutes and told her they were on an island, thickly wooded and some distance from the mainland. He had discovered two ancient bungalows, both recently vacated. Probably the people had fled before the coming sou'easter. There would be shelter in one of the bungalows, he said, and they could have a fire to dry their clothes, but it seemed better to stay where they could see passing boats. Dawn could not be far away and he was going to rig up some sort of distress signal.

Just before daylight they glimpsed the lights of a vessel coming up from the eastward. Tom knew the lights were those of a yacht and wondered if it might be the *Marcia*. He was down by the water's edge rigging up his signal. The tide had fallen considerably now and the poor old *Gleam* looked very forlorn, lying on her side on the sand with water running out of her seams.

Emily, chin on hands, huddled under her blankets and stared into the dying fire and out over the gray sea. A cold saffron streak in the

east foretold the dawn. Birds were stirring in the wood behind her. Dimly she could see Tom moving about down by the water's edge. How tired he must be, poor Tom,—and wet and chilled in the bleak wind in his wet clothes. He was taking care of her. But at what cost, perhaps, to himself! She knew very well what he was likely to bring upon himself by this mad runaway escapade.

And he had come with her against his will—because he loved her. Because he could not stand her terrified weeping. Where was she taking him? Not only had she dragged her own anchor, facing her gale, but she had made him drag his. And now both of them were adrift. Tom had tried to keep his anchor fast and he had tried to show her the lights so that her own little craft could keep clear of the rocks.

But she had no anchor like Tom's—nothing but her own will that was completely self-centered. Never had her anchor mattered to her. So long as the sea was blue and the sun shone her gay little barque had danced on the spindrift with no worry about what was below: firm-holding granite or shifting, unstable sand. When one harbor hadn't pleased her she had sought another. Sun-

shine and blue seas she'd had to have. The least hint of storm had dismayed her . . . because she knew she had nothing steadfast wherewith to meet the testing gale!

Ships rejoicing in the breeze;
Wrecks that drift on unknown seas,
Anchors dragged in faithless sands . . .

She had come across that in the book of Longfellow's poems that she and Frances had been reading since their visit to the Longfellow house in Portland, and the lines had stuck in her memory.

Now she and Tom were adrift on unknown seas because her inadequate anchor had been dropped in the faithless sands of her own desires. Tom's anchor would have held steady and sure had not her cowardly challenge to his love for her made him, too, go adrift.

He was coming to her across the beach in the chill light of the new day and in his white, tired face his gray eyes were smiling at her. His hand closed over hers and together they gazed out at the sea.

"I love you," he said. "We'll find a way somehow, Emily."

Their rescuer was a fishing schooner bound for

Portland with a cargo of lobsters. It came along at five o'clock. The kindly skipper turned over his tiny cabin to Emily and ordered her to get between the blankets; and he carried her clothes himself to the galley to be dried over the stove. Tom was outfitted with a pair of baggy breeches and a flannel shirt and was served a hot breakfast that put new heart into him. Emily did not come on deck until they were rounding Portland breakwater. Beside Tom, near the mast, she watched the wharves and the city drawing nearer. The sun was shining and everything had a wind-swept, rain-washed cleanness after the storm.

Both of them saw the *Marcia*, lying at anchor in the harbor, but neither mentioned it to the other.

CHAPTER XXVIII

HAVING secured a room for Emily at one of the Portland hotels, Tom urged her to go at once to bed and sleep as long as she could. He ordered a substantial breakfast sent up to her and then set about his business. He had a great deal to do. He must buy suitable clothes for traveling, secure reservations on the evening train for New York, get a shave, send a long telegram to Aunt Judith and make arrangements with the shipyard people to have the *Gleam* patched up and towed into Portland.

Since he had to supply himself with everything from hat to shoes it was considerably after twelve when he went up to his room to effect a change of costume. As he slung yesterday's shapeless coat over a chair something fell to the floor. Celia's letter!—he had never thought of it since slipping it into his pocket last night just before Emily called to him.

The envelope was badly water-soaked and also its contents. There were several typewritten enclosures, memoranda relating to some banking

matter. And a letter from Celia, the ink blurred but Celia's beautiful writing still legible. The letter was not long and Tom read it before examining the other papers.

“TOM:—I have left you forty thousand dollars which Cliff knows nothing about. It is deposited in a bank at Newburgh as a trust fund for Aunt Judith Wilson. She lives on the interest only, and later the principal will be yours. If at any time you should be in want Aunt Judith will turn over her interest to you, but in that case you must take care of her.

“As you know, little ‘Aunt Judith’ as you call her was my girlhood friend. Cliff has always been jealous of our devotion and disapproves of the way she is living—hidden away from her husband all these years. But I have sided with Judith and helped her, and I cannot go, leaving her in want and unprotected. As long as she has a penny to her name that man will hound her—if he can find her. He always turned up when his funds were low and for years she supported him, taking in sewing. For the last five years she has lived in Newburgh as ‘Mrs. Clark’ and has been contented and happy. He must not find her. Her sister in California has kept track of him and according to last accounts he has obtained money somehow and is living in great style as a bachelor clubman in Buffalo. He has dropped the Wilson and uses only his first name, Randolph Geggie. . . .”

Tom leaped to his feet.

Randolph Geggie Wilson. Aunt Judith's Ran



SHE LOOKED FORLORNLY OVER THE SEA

Wilson whom he had so often heard discussed by Cliff and Celia. Posing as a clubman in Buffalo. Trying to catch a rich girl. . . .

Trying?—oh, merciful heavens!

Tom dragged on the new clothes somehow, tore out of his room and down to the desk and asked that Miss Brown be sent for at once. (He had registered as Thomas Brown and sister.) He was informed by the clerk that Miss Brown had gone out some time ago but had left a note. He handed it to Tom, who read it standing by the desk.

“Tom dear, I have gone to the *Marcia*. I saw her in the harbor this morning. And this time I am not coming back. I thought it all out last night on that island. My dear, I can't let you drag your anchor because I am afraid to face my gale. You have been right all the way and I have only been cowardly. You have showed me how to steer by the Lights and I am going to try.
“EMILY.”

He flung himself in a taxi, but when he reached the wharf there was no sign of the *Marcia*. Someone on the wharf told him the yacht had gone out an hour ago, headed southward.

Tom got into the taxi and was driven back to the hotel. What to do now? How could he catch

the yacht? Would Geggie go straight on to Boston or would he put in at some port along the way? And without a fast speedboat how could the *Marcia* be trailed and overtaken? Tom's head felt confused and he could not think. He had had no sleep last night and very little the night before, and he had been under devastating emotional strain for thirty-six hours.

There was his bill at the hotel to pay—that was the next thing. Maybe after that he could think, up in the quiet of his room.

As he entered the hotel lounge two elderly gentlemen talking together looked up and one of them rose and came toward Tom. It was old Malcolm Avery.

He was on a little vacation, he told Tom. Had been wanting a breath of Maine air, and as he had some important news for young Tom MacLeod, thought he'd take a run over to Monhegan where he knew Tom was staying. A Mrs. Judith Clark up in Newburgh had died suddenly, he said, and the trust company up there had communicated with him. They had been given his address by Celia MacLeod and they had a large sum of money, deposited by her, to hand over now to her son if he could be located——

“But she wasn’t dead in June!” young Tom was mumbling and the old lawyer looked hard at him. What was the matter with the lad? He looked all-in. Tom was staring over the lawyer’s shoulder at the other elderly gentleman who in turn was staring hard at Tom. Mr. Avery turned. “That’s the man who got your *Vagabond*,” he mentioned. “Raymond Brewster of Buffalo. He’s considerably upset about his niece who is on the boat, he thinks, up this way.”

Tom strode across the lounge.

“You are Mr. Brewster. I remember you, sir. I am Tom MacLeod. You visited my father once on the *Vagabond*.”

“To be sure I did—and I remember you, too. So you are Cliff MacLeod’s boy, eh?” Raymond Brewster put out a cordial hand.

Mr. Avery had come up. “See here, Brewster, young Tom has just come over from Monhegan. He might have seen the boat you are looking for.”

Raymond Brewster turned eagerly. “Did you happen to see the yacht—I believe now she’s called the *Gleam* ——”

“I’m just off her,” said young Tom MacLeod. “I think,” he added, looking Emily’s uncle

straight in the eyes, "you and I have something to say to each other."

It was a long talk and nobody was more interested in the astonishing information bandied back and forth than old Malcolm Avery who sat spell-bound during the recital.

Mr. Brewster had come post haste to Portland and had wired Randolph Geggie to meet him there. Geggie had started on his cruise before Raymond Brewster had arrived home from Europe, but had written Emily's uncle from Boston that he had traced Emily to a yacht called the *Gleam*—through information furnished by some people who had picked up Phœbe Hageboom's eye-glass case.

Three days ago had come a telegram saying that Geggie had located the *Gleam* at Monhegan Island and was going there at once.

And two days ago Raymond Brewster had discovered that Randolph Geggie was in financial difficulties and in debt; and that he had even borrowed the money of Percival to finance this expedition on the *Marcia*. Instantly Raymond Brewster had suspected that Geggie had deliberately played for Emily's fortune—not a large one but sufficient to tempt a man with no income

and deeply in debt. He had never wanted Emily to marry Geggie and had done all he could to dissuade her.

And then, yesterday morning had come the final and worst piece of news.

A woman who had traveled all the way from California had appeared at Mr. Brewster's home and told an amazing story. Randolph Geggie, she claimed, was the husband of her sister Judith, who had just died in Newburgh. The frightened woman had seen a newspaper notice of Ran's marriage to a Buffalo girl, and in the same paper a paragraph about the immediate separation of the couple for some unknown reason. The woman had come at once to Buffalo. The girl, she felt sure, must have discovered that Randolph had a wife living and that though the matter had been hushed up the couple had separated.

Her confession exonerated Geggie in regard to the marriage. He had every reason to believe himself a widower. For after Celia MacLeod died timid little Judith Wilson, terrified at the thought of Randolph Geggie's probable return to claim the money Celia had provided her with, had persuaded her sister to insert a false notice of Judith Wilson's death in a California newspaper

and to send the notice to Randolph Geggie together with a brief letter informing him that "sister Judith has gone."

The woman was almost idiotic with terror at what she might have been responsible for, Mr. Brewster said; and her relief was great at discovering that the girl who had gone through a marriage ceremony with Geggie had never laid eyes on him since. Raymond Brewster had started at once for Maine, wiring Geggie at Monhegan to meet him in Portland before attempting any interview with Emily, and implying very serious reasons for the command.

"Whether he got my telegram I don't know. But I know he was here early this morning. He registered here somewhere about ten o'clock. He told the clerk he was sending his yacht on ahead and would go to Boston by train. He spent half an hour at the telephone making inquiries of various yacht clubs about some boat he seemed anxious to locate—the *Gleam* of course! While he was 'phoning a fellow brought in a message for him. Geggie seemed much excited. He asked the clerk to get him a fast motor-car to take him to Marblehead."

Then it was that old Malcolm Avery uttered the

remark that made young Tom MacLeod his friend for life.

“Very well,” remarked Malcolm Avery, “I suppose there are others who can hire a fast car too!”

It was a memorable trip, that race from Portland to Marblehead. But by the time they slipped into old Marblehead, just as the sun was setting, Mr. Raymond Brewster knew a good deal about Cliff MacLeod’s boy—and liked what he knew. Liked it so well that as they stood in the corridor of the New Fountain Inn (where they found Randolph Geggie’s name on the register) Emily’s uncle put his hand on the young man’s shoulder.

“Tom, my boy, you go out to that yacht and fetch Emily. Geggie’s in his room; he only arrived half an hour ago. Avery and I will talk to him. There is no reason why she should see him—or you either.”

Tom rowed across a harbor deep rose under the afterglow of sunset. Anchor lights were twinkling out on the yachts. A little silver shallop of a moon rode low in the west. The *Marcia* was lying almost where the *Gleam* had anchored. No tender was tied alongside and Tom supposed the skipper had rowed ashore to meet Randolph Geggie. He saw Emily sitting by the rail with

Ming in her arms. She was wrapped in the white woolly coat and her eyes were very sad as she looked off across the water. She did not see Tom until he had clambered aboard and stood beside her on the after deck. Then she sprang up, staring at him with wide eyes.

He took her in his arms and told her.

The telling took a long time. The rose light faded and the little silver moon sank out of sight. Came blue twilight—and dusk—and dark. Ming went to sleep again while the two he loved most sat close together on a seat by the rail. *Vagabond*, or *Gleam*, or *Marcia*, it was all the same to Ming. So long as his own were beside him, his world was perfect.

Off to southward gleamed a light, jewel-bright against the dark. One flash, four flashes, three flashes. The light of Minot.

“Our light, Tom,” Emily whispered. “The first light you showed me—do you remember? We’re going to steer by it, and it will take us safe ——”

“Home,” finished young Tom. And kissed her.



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